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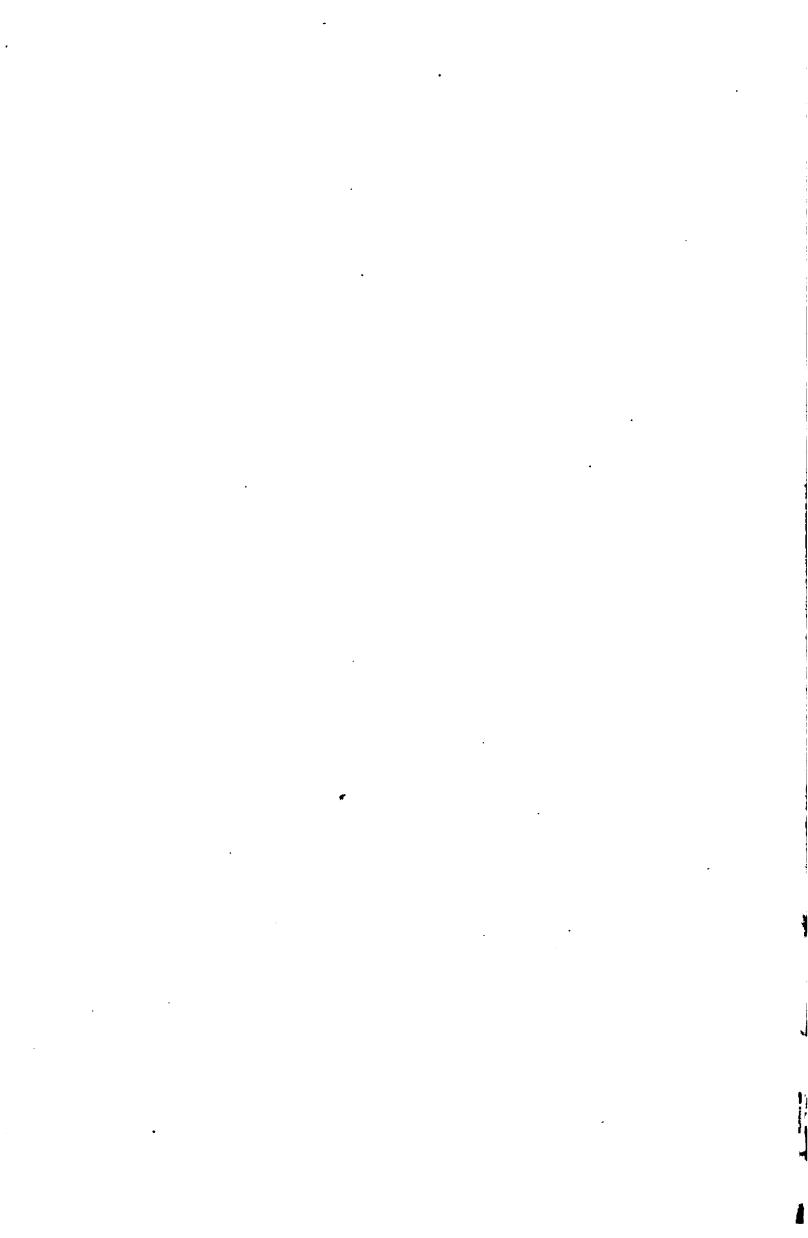


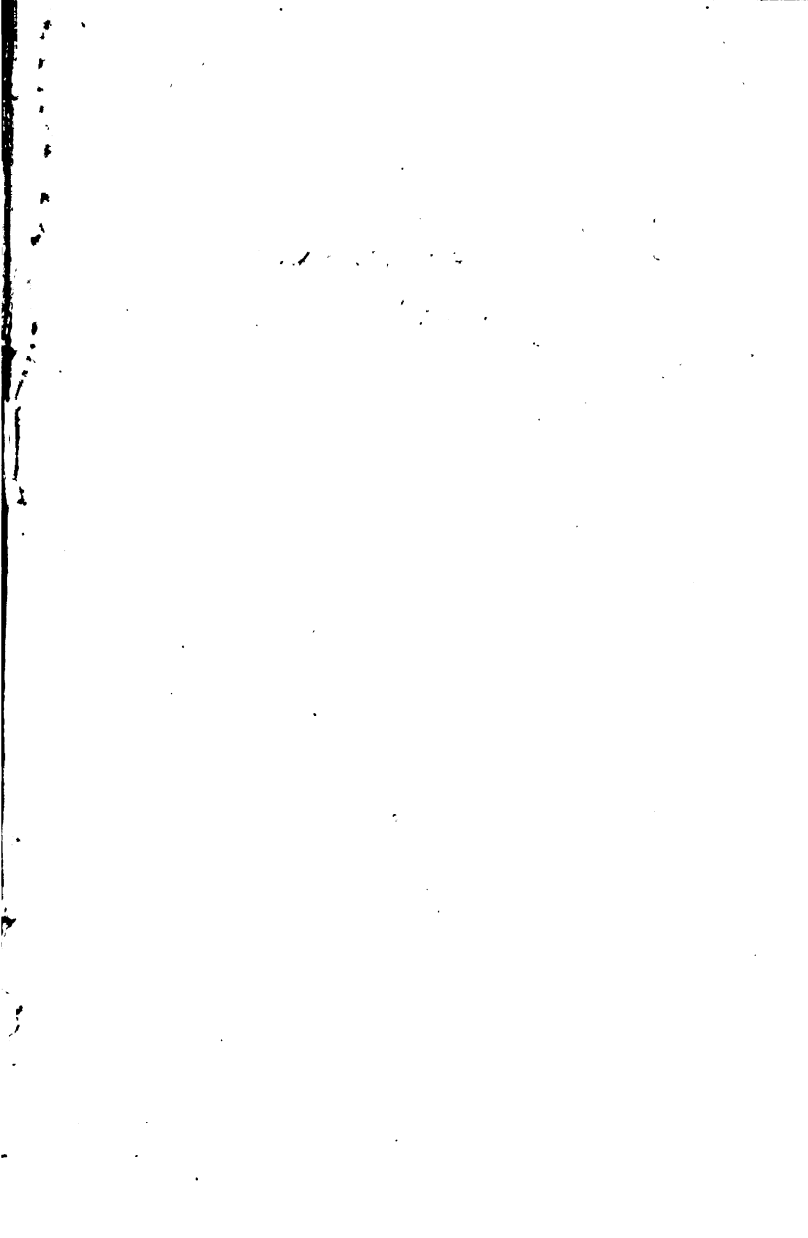
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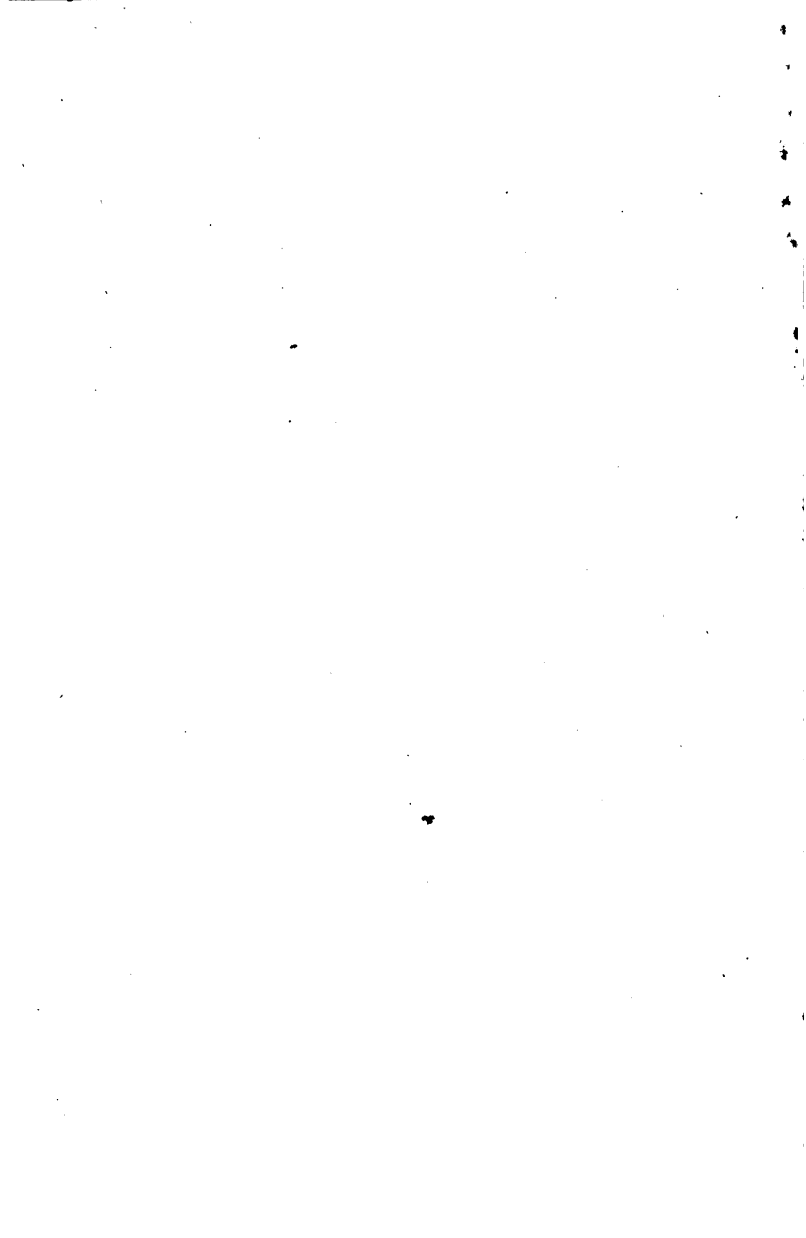


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TO THE
CONGREGATION OF THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
OF WATSONVILLE,

For whom they were first prepared,
These Lectures are now respectfully
And affectionately dedicated.

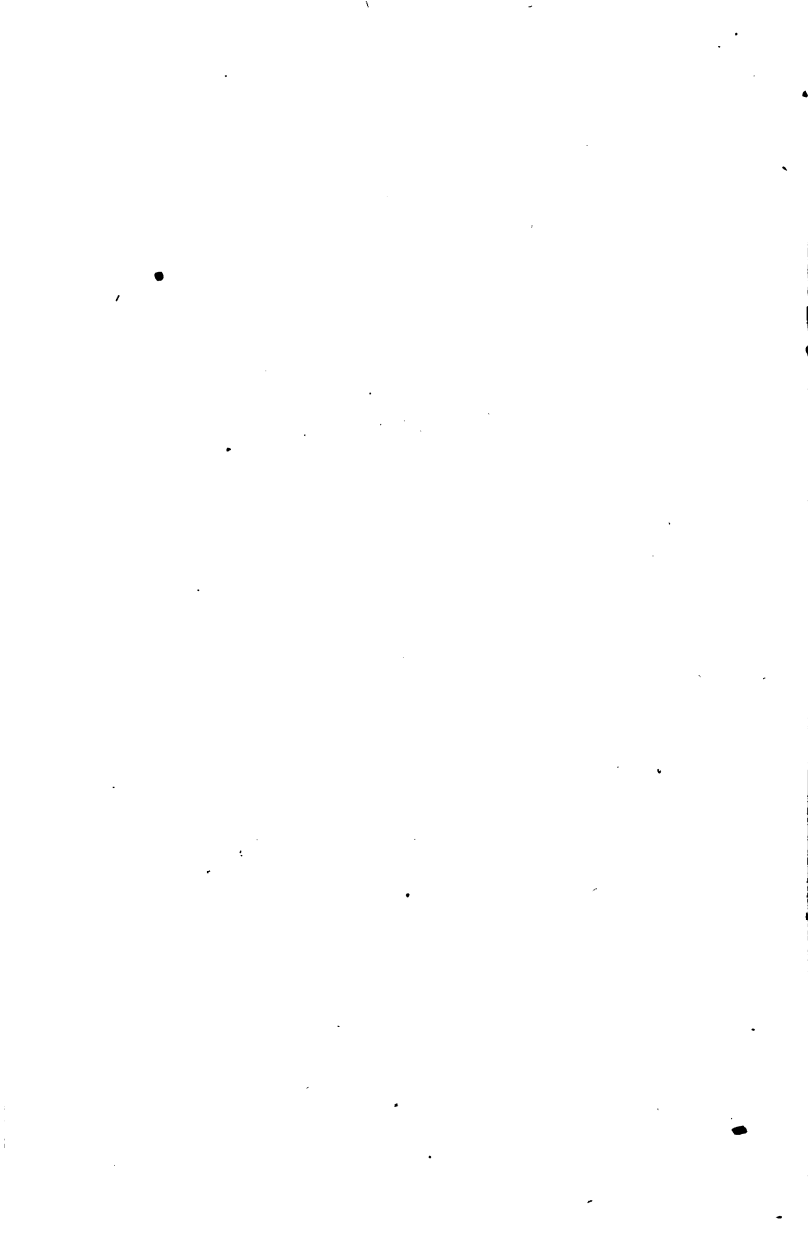


Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive
our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen.



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I.

OUR FATHER.

*“After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father
which art in Heaven.”—MATT. vi: 9.*

“OUR FATHER.”

“Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight’s hour of harm,
‘Our Father!’ looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except ‘Our Father!’
And we think that, in some pause of angel’s song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
‘Our Father!’ If He heard us He would surely,
(For they call Him good and mild,)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
‘Come and rest with me, my child.’”

—*Mrs. Browning’s “Cry of the Children.”*

FATHERHOOD ! Brotherhood ! The church on earth,
and the church in heaven !

These are the themes to which our attention is directed
by the opening words of this wonderful prayer.

The whole prayer bears the impress of divinity.

There is a beauty, simplicity, and comprehensiveness
in it which is more than human.

As the works of men bear the impress of their author,
and indicate his worth, so the works of God bear
unmistakable marks of divine and celestial glory,

He who understands and appreciates the works of a Milton, or a Homer, will never confound them with the productions of an inferior author. His taste is cultivated, and he sees beauties which to others are involved in impenetrable obscurity. The same is true of the revelations of our Lord. No mind which is illumined by the Spirit can ever mistake these truths or confound them with the productions of any other author. Their ineffable dignity, purity, and divine glory are as plain and manifest as was the glory of our Lord himself, when He stood upon the Mount transfigured.

The truths conveyed in the mere invocation of this model prayer, this single expression, "Our Father who art in Heaven," are enough to demonstrate the divinity of our Lord, and the righteousness of His claims. No man can understand, or use this invocation aright, but by the Spirit of God. It breathes the Spirit of adoption. How can a stranger or an alien understand or possess this spirit? It breathes the Spirit of freedom and filial confidence. How can a captive of Satan and a slave of sin approach God thus?

Natural men do not worship God, or acknowledge His authority, much less do they understand or experience the higher joys which come from divine relationship and affiliation. Our God is not the God of the dead—much less is He the father of them. "Come out from among them and be ye separate," is the language of His

word, and then "I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." May the blessed Spirit open our eyes, and assist our faculties, as we attempt to look into some of the wonders, glories, mysteries and revelations of these wondrous words: "Our Father who art in Heaven." We have been using them all our lives, but we have never yet scaled their heights, or sounded their depths.

The three natural divisions of our subject are:

- I. The Filial ;
- II. The Fraternal ; and
- III. The Celestial.

I.

Let us first use this invocation with the emphasis on this word FATHER. Our Father. It is not our Creator, or Preserver, or our Governor, but Our Father. Next to the sweet word mother, what word is there in the English language more touchingly tender, and more suggestive of human love, sympathy, and divine protection.

The Mohammedans have ninety-nine names of God, but among them all they have not the name of Father. There is a sense in which God is the Father of everything which He creates, as the author or originator of any work is said to be the father of it.

He is the Father of the sun, the moon, and all the starry hosts above. He is the Father of the meanest insect, as well as of the noblest seraph. He is the Father of all beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, yea, even of the clods of the valley, as well as of the most beautiful objects around us and above.

In a higher sense, He is the Father of spirits, for all spiritual beings were originally made to resemble Him in their intellectual powers, in their moral endowments, in their spirituality, immortality, holiness and happiness.

But there is another and a better sense in which believers are the children of God, and by which they are enabled to claim God as their Father.

Natural relationship does not constitute the whole of fatherhood or sonship. Our Lord said of certain Jews "Ye are of your father, the devil." They were living without God, in voluntary and habitual ignorance of His character, practically denying His existence, and in every way refusing to recognize Him. This is the state of man. He is detached from God by sin. The image of God which was the original glory of His character, has been defaced. He is no longer a loving, trusting child, but an alien, a stranger, a wanderer, utterly destitute of all the characteristics of spiritual childhood. An officer in the army, in writing to his wife, said: "I have seen God in His mysterious majesty in nature; I have seen him presiding in His gracious providence on the battlefield;

but, alas! I have not seen Him as my Father. I have not felt toward Him as a child. Oh, for the simplicity of faith, the character of a child! God give it to me.”

God is our Father then, not by creation, but by adoption. The sonship, to which our Lord refers when He says and teaches us to say, “Our Father,” is the peculiar privilege of redeemed sinners, a privilege such as no other creature of God has ever yet enjoyed. It involves regeneration, the work of the Spirit renewing and sanctifying, delight in the character thus formed, and everlasting love, including protection from all outward evils, and provision for all wants within.

On the human side it involves penitence, submission, faith, love, and all the gifts and graces which come in the train of faith.

The connecting link by which this divine relationship is formed, is faith. “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Not by nature, but by grace. Not by creation, or culture, but by faith. Not by faith in self, or in any earthly person or object, but by faith in Christ Jesus. This is God’s glorious way of entrance to all the privileges of sonship. No matter who you are, where you are, or how you may have vexed Him or grieved Him, by your sin; the door stands open. Believe, and thou shalt have the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!

Only believe, and thou shalt hear the Father’s voice

saying, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Only believe, and thou shalt be an heir of God, and joint heir of Christ. Only believe, and if there be thrones, and dominions, harps, and crowns, and glories ineffable, which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath entered the heart of man," these also shall be thine, for the sonship of the believer is an everlasting sonship. Only believe, and thou shalt enter into a covenant which is everlasting, receive life which is everlasting, and an inheritance which shall not be taken away.

O! how glorious to be conscious of such a life, and such possessions, and to say with the poet,

"This world is ours, and worlds to come,
Earth is our Lodge and Heaven our home."

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

As the sun in the heavens is the main source of all the silent, mighty, invisible forces of nature, so the Sun of righteousness is the source of all spiritual life and power. He alone can speak dead souls to life; He alone can give men power to become the sons of God. The prime moving power in all our mills and manufactories is the sun. His heat raises the water of the sea in vapors. These floating in the air are condensed in clouds, and thence descending are gathered by a thousand little rills, and poured into a single stream, which, moving on with constantly increasing force, becomes a

mighty power for good. To the sun also we owe the wonders achieved by steam on the railway and on the sea, and all the other manifestations of this mighty power. The moving force is the steam, but the steam is due to the fire, the fire is maintained by the fuel, and the fuel, whether wood or coal, derives all its heat from the rays of the sun.

Just as truly is the Sun of righteousness the source of all spiritual life, and all right views and feelings toward God, as is the material sun in the heavens the source of all animal life and mechanical power. No man can come unto the Father but by Him, and coming to Him involves all the feelings, affections and graces of a child of God. Aliens and slaves stand at a distance, but children and heirs are freely admitted to all the secret treasures of the Father's love and care.

Nothing is hidden from them. They go in and out at pleasure, and in their Father's presence are at home.

There is a freedom, a joy, a conscious satisfaction in their Father's presence which no where else is felt or found. They look to him for instruction, support and protection.

They are ignorant, and need instruction ; weak, and they need support ; passionate and unruly, and they need His guidance and control. But blessed be His holy name, none of these weaknesses or infirmities of the flesh shall ever be able to separate us from Him, or destroy

our sonship. A little girl whose father was shipwrecked, knelt at her mother's knee, and, as her custom was, began to say, “God bless my dear father.” Her mother interrupted, telling her that she had no father, for he was drowned, and she would never see his face again on earth; and then the child began to say, “Our Father who art in heaven.” Three times she repeated these words, and then looking up with tearful eyes, exclaimed: “O! mother, we have a Father; God is our Father. Jesus said so. He told us to pray ‘Our Father who art in Heaven.’ ”

Glorious truth! First and most blessed of the revelations of our Lord! Go to the poor, distressed, houseless, homeless wanderers, and tell them you have a Father. You are no longer shut out from His presence. You are no longer obliged to wander as orphans in a cold and comfortless world. God, the ever-living, ever-present God, is the father of men, the father of all who come to Him by Christ, and claim His love and protection. The gift of His spirit is the gift of a father to His children, and to all His children who will receive it. All the inexhaustible treasures of His Kingdom may be yours by faith. You may be accepted in the beloved, adopted into His family, and made heirs of the “inheritance of the saints in light.”

Have you learned this truth? Have you the spirit of adoption? Can you say, Abba, Father? Is God your

Father, and is the righteousness of God your refuge, your habitation, your strong tower of defense? If so, you are ready for the second division of our subject.

The filial spirit includes the fraternal. He who recognizes the divine Fatherhood cannot be a stranger to the feeling of brotherly love. He who can say my Father, my Lord, and my God, can also say Our Father.

“When we no longer lie,
Like slaves beneath the throne,
Our Faith will Abba, Father, cry,
And then the kindred own.”

II.

Our Father! Put the emphasis now on this word *our*. It is not my Father, or your Father, but *our* Father.

This word *our* is as comprehensive and all embracing as the infinite love of God himself. It reaches beyond the narrow limits of our own personal wants, and our own individual salvation; beyond the domain of the family, church, or sect to which we may belong, and embraces the whole human race. It teaches us to “add to brotherly kindness, charity,” and reveals beyond the inner circle of christian brotherhood an outer circle of divine benevolence, a love which leaps beyond all bounds and limitations.

First, it embraces all who are in Christ.

“One family, we dwell in him,
One church above, beneath.”

Then it reaches out for those who are scattered abroad and seeks to gather them in. Sin separates; love unites. Sin says, “every man for himself;” love says, “every man for Christ.” “He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”

Love, life, and liberty are the richest gifts of the spirit.

Coming from the same root these words express ideas in many respects similar. As the life of a tree unites all its parts, causing each to work for every other, and all to work together for the growth and development of the whole, so love pervades and unites the whole family of God. And as liberty knocks off all the shackles of restraint, and sets the soul free, so love gives freedom from the restraints of law and duty, and delivers the soul from the pinching, binding, cramping and perverting power of selfish passions.

I have read somewhere a story of a man who, possessing large stores of food, kept it concealed amid the horrors of a famine. Hundreds of unhappy creatures were perishing around him. He heard the wail of hungry, starving children, crying for bread which their mothers could not give them. He heard the clamor of the maddened multitude. He saw women with infants on their withered bosoms fall fainting in the streets.

He saw gaunt and famished men fiercely fighting over a bone like hungry dogs. Multitudes were perishing before his eyes, while he, the monster, the fiend incarnate, with hellish delight was coolly calculating how much money he would make by his horrible crime against God and humanity.

Such is the crime, and such in the sight of God is the character of those who with abundant means for usefulness look upon the famine of truth, and love, and godliness which prevails, and yet withhold the bread of life. We are not our own, we are bought with a price. We are not sent into this world to get wealth, and enjoy ourselves.

Heaven smiles above us; hell yawns beneath.

Around us is a perishing world, and before us is the judgment.

“O! brothers !

View the day of retribution !
 Think how you will hear
 From your Redeemer's lips
 Those awful words: thy brother,
 Perishing in his own blood,
 Thou sawest. Thy brother hungered,
 Was athirst, was naked,
 And thou sawest it: he was sick,
 Thou didst withhold the healing;
 Was in prison to vice and ignorance,
 Nor didst thou send to set him free.
 O! ere that hour of doom,
 Whence there is no reprieve,
 Brethren, awake from this dark dream.”

III.

Notice now the place to which our thoughts are directed, as we pray, “Our Father WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.” Some conceive of Heaven as a place far above us, in the upper air, among the clouds. Others think of Heaven as a state, expecting to find the realization of all their dreams of bliss in the perfect equilibrium and harmonization of all their moral and spiritual powers. Others still look on *this world* redeemed and purified as the final home of the people of God. The true idea includes all these conceptions. Heaven is a place, Heaven is a state, and Heaven will yet possess this world, and make it but a province of the world of light above. Heaven is the dwelling-place of God,—of Jesus,—of the angels, and of our departed friends. Whether at the center of the universe or in some other place, it matters not. God speaks of Heaven as above us, in order to elevate our thoughts.

Elijah went up to Heaven in a whirlwind. Jesus *ascended into heaven*.

All things, sacred, noble, great and sublime, are associated in our minds with great height. Hence when we come to God in prayer, our thoughts tend upward, and we are led to “seek those things which are above,” and set our affections “on things above.” God wants to bring Heaven near us. He uses the plural number

here in order to suggest the degrees, grades, or spheres of holiness and happiness reaching from the highest Heavens down to this world of ours. He wants to remove all obstructions from our minds and hearts, and so to spiritualize our entire nature that we may live as in the very presence of God's own blessed company, spiritual and eternal things no longer dim, distant, and shadowy, but having the effect of realities upon us. By every means within His power He is striving to counteract the downward tendency of our souls.

He has made us for Heaven, and Heaven for us, and though we have despised our birthright, He has not utterly forsaken us, or cast us off. His purposes, His promises, His law, His gospel, His providence, His church on earth, and His blessed angels above, the ministering spirits sent forth to cheer and help us, are all pledged for our salvation, and all united in the blessed work of deliverance. Nothing but a depraved will, a dark, desperate, and unyielding human will, can ever hinder Him from the accomplishment of His purpose.

Use this prayer aright, with honesty and sincerity. Claim God as your Father, all the children of God as brethren, bound by common ties to a common Lord, and Heaven,—the Heaven of heavens, where God unveils His brightest glories as your everlasting home. Learn to say “Our Father who art in Heaven,” not as a cold, dead formula of lifeless words, but as the nat-

ural expression of the feelings of a trusting, loving child. Raise your thoughts and wishes higher. Live near your God, your Savior, and your beautiful home on high; use all earthly things as types and shadows of things divine, and use all heavenly things, the Bible, the Sabbath, and all the privileges and ordinances of the sanctuary as God designed that you should use them. Heavenly in their nature and origin, coming from a brighter and better world, they point us thither. Cherish their holy influences. Work while the day lasts, and may the Master add his blessing.

"O! more than merciful; whose bounty gave
Thy guiltless self to glut the greedy grave,
Whose heart was pierced to pay Thy people's price,
The great High Priest at once and sacrifice.
Blest Jesus! by Thy cross and crimson stains,
Let not Thy precious blood be spilt in vain."

II.

OUR FATHER'S NAME.

"Hallowed be thy name."—**MATT. vi: 9.**

“OUR FATHER’S NAME.”

“Father! the sweetest, dearest name
That men or angels know!
Fountain of life that had no fount
From which itself could flow!

“All fathers learn their craft from Thee;
All loves are shadows cast
From the beautiful eternal hills
Of Thine unbeginning past.”

From Faber’s “Eternal Father.”

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

This is the language of the bright beings above—the pure and spotless spirits who surround the throne of God in Heaven.

It is the first desire of every child of God.

Next to the cry of the new-born soul—the birth cry, Abba, Father, comes this great desire for the uplifting, honoring, magnifying, and sanctifying of the name, the everlasting name, of our everlasting Father.

Whenever the believer turns away from the world, and goes into the presence of the Infinite, as he draws near to Heaven’s eternal throne, holds conference with the

King eternal, and turns toward Him his earth-born countenance, the dominant feeling is that expressed in this first petition.

As the child draws near to the Father, the Father draws near to the child.

Celestial light is poured upon him and around him. The mists and the vapors which rise from his lower nature and darken his prospects are removed. All discordant feelings are subdued and hushed. Self is humbled, and the all-glorious holiness of God absorbs his mind and fills the place. He is

“Lost in wonder, love and praise.”

“Plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea,
And lost in His immensity.”

The overpowering splendors of the beauty of God so charm and captivate his mind, that he can think of nothing else. His works, His words, His character and attributes, these are the first and greatest things, and to glorify God, to magnify, honor and reverence His name, must be henceforth the controlling purpose of his life.

Near the close of the Old Testament scriptures, we read of a book of remembrance. This book, it is said, was written before the Lord, in His presence, and under His eye, and the persons for whom it was written are designated as those who “feared the Lord, and thought upon His name.” Our Heavenly Father never forgets His people, however careless they may be, or however un-

mindful of Him or His mercies. Still there seems to be a special remembrance of those who remember Him—those who in the midst of great and wide-spread neglect and indifference are wakeful and watchful, and who take delight in thinking on the name of the Lord.

It is to this delightful exercise that we are now invited, —thinking on the name which is above every name.

I.

There is something in a name. It may seem to be a very simple name, a name very easily spoken or written, but when it becomes a synonym for virtue, goodness, patience or meekness, when it becomes so interlinked or interblended with the best and noblest things, that separation is impossible, then it begins to have weight.

The wise man says, “a good name is better than ointment, and rather to be chosen than great riches.”

There are names the very mention of which awaken thoughts and feelings most pleasing and delightful. More fragrant are they than all the aroma of the flowers and fruits of Eden, and more precious and enduring than gold tried in the fire. Our hearts open to them; we love to see them; we love to write them; we love to hear them spoken, and we love to meditate upon them. The name suggests the person, the character, and all the

beauties and excellencies of mind and heart which that character has exhibited, and all the great eternal truths which it has demonstrated and enforced. Abraham suggests faith ; Moses, meekness ; Job, patience ; Joshua, valor ; Israel, power ; Peter, zeal ; Paul, courage ; and John, love. But the name of the Lord suggests all these, and all other excellences, human and divine.

A whole constellation of moral glories and spiritual beauties starts to life, and comes before us at the very mention of it. There are names which are mighty in the commercial world, such as Stewart, Vanderbilt, and others. There are names which are mighty in the scientific world, such as Agassiz, Herschel, Spencer. Cæsar, Bonaparte, Grant and others, are names which are mighty in the military world. But the name of the Lord is mighty in all worlds. It has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, opened seas, rolled up rivers, stopped the mouths of lions, healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils, and overcome all things.

Dr. Kane, when asked by a friend as to what in all his adventures had produced the deepest and most lasting impression, replied : “ The silence of an Arctic night.” The shrieking and howling of the stormy wind, the furious dashing and commingling of the angry waves, the grinding and crashing of huge masses of ice, and all the other fearful sights and frightful sounds of that frozen

region, were as nothing in comparison to the silent solemnity, grandeur, and mystery of the night. Just such is the mighty, overpowering influence of the simple, silent, awful name of God.

O! what ineffable glories, what unfathomable mysteries, lie hidden in His name. It is the world’s great secret. Patriarchs, and prophets, fathers, and martyrs, have tried to sound its depths, and have failed. Angels of light have tried in vain to unravel its mysteries of love and wisdom.

The great work of the church, on earth and in Heaven, is to gather up the scattered fragments of truth, and try to spell this name, this ineffable and incomprehensible name. For this the Son of God came into this world, and for this He sends His people. Before He came He said, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren;” and before He left the world, He said, “I *have* declared thy name, and *will* declare it.” By His birth, His life, His words, His works, His death, His resurrection and ascension, He declared the name of His Father, and our Father. He is himself the embodiment and personification of it; and though the name itself is beyond our comprehension, and ever will be, we may know enough of it for our salvation by coming unto Him, who is the “brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” He takes the name by which Jehovah revealed Himself to Moses, and He applies it to himself.

“I am that I am,” was the name God gave to Moses.

“Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.”

These words doubtless seemed strange to Moses, and through all the ages men have been searching for their hidden meaning. But does not Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, with His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light, remind us of the burning bush? And when we hear Him saying “I am the way;” “I am the light of the world;” “I am the good shepherd;” are we not reminded of the great I Am of Moses? Is not this Jesus who says to His disciples, “Go ye into all the world and preach,” and “I am with you always,” the same who said to Moses, “Certainly I will be with thee?” And shall we not turn aside as Moses did, to see this great sight, this glorious sight, which fills all Heaven with wonder—God dwelling with men, God manifest in the flesh? Here, then, in Jesus, the great secret of the name of God is unfolded and revealed.

Great as He is, glorious as He is—so great, grand, glorious and exalted, that the mightiest intellect of men and angels can never comprehend Him, He is brought through Christ, within the reach of the humblest, weakest child.

Our catechism says, “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, power, justice, holiness, goodness and truth.” Jesus says, “God is our Heavenly

Father;” and again, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” When the coming of the Great God of the universe was announced to Joseph, the angel said: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save his people from their sins.” Later still, when He appeared to Paul in the great light, the glorious Shekinah, symbol of the divine presence, He said, “I am Jesus.” What name so expressive, so attractive, so beautiful and full of meaning! What name to a sinner, a convicted sinner, or a sinner saved, so full of comfort, hope, joy, blessing, and promise of future glory and deliverance!

It speaks of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane, and Calvary, and all the scenes of His sad story.

It brings Him near. We see Him, hear Him, feel the pressure of His hand, yea, the very throbbing of His heart, as we lean upon His breast with John, the beloved. Other names and titles may seem appropriate at certain times, and places, but Jesus covers all, embraces all, and signifies more than we shall ever be able to grasp of the infinite riches of God’s power, and love, and wisdom.

II.

The name of our God is profaned by perjury, or false swearing. God has spoken, and with all the authority of Heaven has declared, “Thou shalt not” commit this sin. He who, with solemn appeal to the God of Heaven,

and with his hand upon the Bible, declares that he will speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and then bears witness to that which he knows to be false, is profaning the name of God in the most odious, dishonorable and contemptible manner. He is committing a sin which is universally detested, and striking a blow at the root of all religion, and all good government.

Defamation, speaking against this name, is another way in which it may be profaned. This was the sin of the Jews, when Jesus warned them that by going a step further they might make their condemnation sure. Detraction, irreverent handling, putting any other name in its place, profanes this name, as when one of the Pope's Cardinals prepared a Litany by taking portions of the Psalms, and substituting the name of the virgin Mary in the place of the name of Jehovah. God save us from the curse of those who thus "add unto" or "take away from the words of the book of this prophecy."

But the most common of all the ways in which His name is profaned, is that called blasphemy, or profane swearing. The name of the Lord is a holy name. To take it on our lips irreverently is to insult the majesty of Heaven. Of all the sins which men commit, this is the most unnatural and unreasonable. Depraved as human nature is, no child or youth can blaspheme the name of

God, until by evil associations he has been drawn down below his natural level. No child uses profane language till he has learned it from others. The first time he hears such language he is shocked, and the first oath which falls from his own lips makes him tremble. It is a low and groveling vice. It gratifies no passion; it has no excuse. It is dreadfully hardening, stupefying, and defiling. It defiles consciences, families, neighborhoods, towns, cities and nations.

“Because of swearing, the land mourneth,” says Jeremiah. Time was when a man might go through our land, and scarcely hear an oath; but now, from lowest to highest, and from highest to lowest, the whole land seems to be defiled by this groveling vice. In Washington’s order book, April 3d, 1776, we find these words:

“The general is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane swearing, a vice hitherto little known in our American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it; and that both they and the men will reflect that we can have but little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms *if we insult Him by our impiety and folly*. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that a man of sense and character despises it.”

When Alcibiades, a Grecian general, had profaned the names of the gods of Athens, the people rose *en masse*

and forbade him to march against their enemies until he had confessed his sin, and made atonement. They felt that it was madness and folly to expect the blessing of the gods upon their enterprise while treating them with such contempt.

The common sense of all nations cries out against this sin, which is grieving the spirit, hardening the hearts, and sealing the doom of thousands, who day by day dwell under the heavy curse of Him who says: “The swearer shall be cut off,” and that He “will not hold him guiltless.”

III.

How then may the name of God be hallowed? By holy lips, holy hearts, and holy lives.

As no man can say “Abba, Father,” without the spirit of adoption, so no man can say, “Hallowed be Thy name,” without the spirit of holiness.

He who has the filial spirit, the spirit which binds us to God, or grows out of our relationship to Him, is pardoned, accepted, and saved. United to God, he is one with God. He lives in the enjoyment of all the privileges of sonship.

The fraternal is but a modification of the filial, for as sin and rebellion produce separation and division, so the opposite, holy love, unites us first to God, and then

to all His people. This love reaches its highest manifestation when it becomes celestial—the perfect love of the angels, and the redeemed in Heaven.

Flowing through this world this holy love is diluted;—and as nothing imperfect, and nothing which defiles can enter Heaven, our constant prayer is for that “holiness without which no man can see the Lord.” “A little deeper,” said a soldier, as a surgeon was probing his wound, “a little deeper and you will find Napoleon.” So, far down in the depths of the heart of every child of God, is written this name, this everlasting name. Our hearts are chosen vessels to bear His name. O! for that purity which shall make them fit receptacles for such a treasure.

The right use of His name involves a proper conception of its mighty power.

“They that know Thy name,” says the Psalmist, “will put their trust in Thee.” And again, “the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.”

Again, “Nevertheless He saved them *for His own name’s sake.*”

There is power then in this name to protect, deliver, and save. It can open the gates of heaven, and it can shut the gates of hell. It has power to make men rich, and it has power to give men life. It is a *mighty*, yea, an *almighty* name. It is full of authority, power and love.

Spiritualists tell us that the invisible beings who "walk the earth unseen," have power to make a rich man poor in one day, and a poor man rich in one day." Such power in the hands of any creature would be a most dangerous possession. One being, and one alone, can claim this power.

He who sitteth on the Throne, the Throne of nature, providence, grace and glory, has *all* power, and He alone can raise men up or cast them down at pleasure. By a single touch of His finger He can cast the mighty from their seats, or raise up those of low degree.

There are men who by a single scratch of their pens, affixing their signatures to a piece of paper, may control the commerce of a nation. The name of Bismark saved the life of a young man condemned to death. The name of Nicholas saved another from disgrace and ruin. But take the names of the mightiest men, and use them at the bar of God, and you find them powerless. Demand an entrance to the kingdom in the name of Napoleon, Bismark, Cæsar or Alexander, and what would be the result? Take even the names of the best and the holiest, such as Paul, Peter, or the beloved disciple, even these, great as they are, and good as they are, have no power to open or shut the everlasting gates.

But use the name of the Lord, the name of Jehovah, Jesus, and the gates are opened, and free access is given

to all the honors, glories, riches and splendors of the celestial world. Thank God, then, for the use of this name. Our names are worthless—His name is above every name, and at the mention of it every knee shall bow.

It matters very little what becomes of our names, but the name of our God must be known and honored, or men perish. This is the reason why all good men are so anxious to tell to others all they know about it. “His name shall endure forever,” says the Psalmist; “His name shall endure forever,” is the echo of our hearts.

The cathedrals, pyramids, and temples of earth may pass away, but His name shall endure forever. All earthly kingdoms may perish, but His name shall endure forever.

The great, rich, wise and mighty, may try to blacken and destroy it, but in spite of all their madness, and folly, “HIS NAME SHALL ENDURE FOREVER.”

“People and realms of every tongue,
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim,
Their early blessings on His name.”



III.

OUR FATHER'S KINGDOM.

The bright visions of hope and joy and future triumph, dim, shadowy and distant, which cheered the hearts of patriarchs and prophets, have become a glorious reality.

This is the gospel message. The Kingdom of God has come; it is not a dream of the past or hope of the future, but a living, present, and glorious reality. We are living, not in the seed-time, but in the harvest.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."

It matters not that men are blind, and do not see the glory of this kingdom. It matters not that men are deaf, and do not hear our message. Our Lord directs us to say, as we shake the dust from our feet, "Be ye sure of this, that the Kingdom of God has come nigh unto you."

Tell it to the nations, publish it to every creature, to the hardened and impenitent, obdurate and unyielding, as well as to those who joyfully accept the message. Proclaim it on the house-tops, and to the millions who sit in pagan darkness, that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The Kingdom of God has come, and whosoever will may enter and be saved.

How blessed the message! How good and glorious the tidings! What joyous news for the poor, oppressed and suffering millions of a death-doomed race! Already

this Kingdom has overspread large portions of this globe. The mightiest minds have been conquered, subdued, and held beneath its sovereign dominion. Anti-Christ is shattered. False religions are withering to their very roots. The once proud fabrics of idolatry are tottering, trembling, falling, and the long, dark night of barbarism, despotism, and superstition, is rapidly rolling away. Day by day this prayer ascends, and day by day the answer comes, and the Kingdom advances.

I. The King.

II. The Kingdom.

III. The Coming.

I.

Many years before our Savior uttered these words, holy men had said that the time was coming when the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed. The first announcement of this great truth was made in the garden of Eden, in the promise made to Adam.

“It was the saddest time e’er known on earth,
As sin and sorrow woke in Paradise,
When mercy’s voice, ’mid frightened nature’s cries,
Broke forth, and pledged a Savior’s birth.”

Father Abraham desired to see the fulfillment of this prophecy, and from the battlements of Heaven he saw it

and was glad. Jacob, the aged patriarch, caught a glimpse of the coming glories, and died exclaiming, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O! Lord." The prophet Daniel saw the kingdom, in vision, breaking in pieces, destroying and subduing all other kingdoms, under the figure of a stone, a little stone, which smote the image (type of earthly kingdoms) on its feet, and then became a mountain, rising, swelling, enlarging, and increasing, until at length it filled the whole earth. The same event had been foretold by Enoch, Noah, Job, Isaiah, and many other prophets. The kingdom was symbolized by the Jewish theocracy; its peaceful nature, glory and splendors shadowed forth by the reign of Solomon; and John the Baptist had come to announce its near approach, crying in the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord."

But there could be no kingdom without a king, and He who was to reign in such a kingdom must be peculiarly fitted for the position. As it was to be the kingdom of God, He must be divine, in order that He might understand the nature and principles of the divine government.

As it was to be established among men, and in the hearts of men, He must be a human being, that He might have sympathy for men, and be a suitable judge of human actions. Where then could such a king be found? Not among men, for no human being could ever pretend to possess such qualifications. Not among angels, for

though great in power and high in authority, none could ever dare to claim the prerogatives of the Infinite.

With all the universe to select from, God the Father searches for a king. He looks through all the innumerable worlds which he has created, He looks through all the ranks of men, He looks through all the ranks of angels. From gallery to gallery, from throne to throne, from lowest to highest, and from highest to lowest, from the simplest and the humblest up through all the principalities and powers to the mighty arch-angels, who with Gabriel stand in the very presence of God, He makes a careful search. Last of all He looks upon His Son, His only Son! “the brightness of His Father’s glory, and express image of His person.”

Here is one in whom are concentrated all the necessary qualifications, human and divine. Here is one whom above all others, the God of the universe delights to honor. Into His hands this new kingdom shall be committed. He shall be Lord of nature, Lord of the people; Conqueror of death, and King of glory. His dominion shall be “from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.” Men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed. His name shall be called “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.”

For this He came, and for this He suffered.

It is said of the ancient princes of Egypt, that before

they could sit upon the throne of royalty, and take into their hands the reins of authority, they were required to pass through all the different conditions and ranks of society. They abstained from food and drink, that they might understand the feelings of those who were hungry and thirsty, and destitute of the common mercies of life. They toiled with burdens, that they might know the feelings of the slave. From the field, the quarry, or the workshop, they went into the palace of the king to serve, and so passed through all kinds of labor and of service, all ranks and grades of society, from that of the lowest menial up to the throne itself, in order that they might sympathize with all, and understand their joys and sorrows, pleasures and privations.

Similar to this was the humiliation and suffering of Christ. "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Though all the kingdoms of the world were His, yet He "made himself of no reputation," and there is no condition of suffering, of service, or of severe temptation, with which He is not fully conversant. He, then, and He alone, is King, and the claim of the Roman Pontiff as supreme judge and director of the consciences of men—"the sole, last, and supreme judge of right and wrong," is nothing less than

blasphemy. The title of “Blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords,” belongs alone to Jesus, and the time is coming when “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess” this truth.

II.

This kingdom is a *gracious* kingdom. This is its first and most distinguishing characteristic. It is a kingdom of grace, a reign of sovereign, free and everlasting grace.

In this kingdom God is offering special gifts and favors to undeserving and rebellious men. Men who have forfeited all claim to the peculiar privileges of the governments in which they live, may here find pardon and favor. Earthly monarchs are considered gracious when they yield to the earnest petitions of their subjects; but God manifests His love to us, in that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Before the ruin, the redemption began; before men sued for pardon, the free gift came. No sinner would ever have been saved, and no song of redemption would ever have been sung on earth, or heard in Heaven, but for this grace.

“Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man,
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

“Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days ;
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”

Grace laid the plan of redemption. Grace brought the Son of God from Heaven. Grace caused Him willingly to suffer. Grace drove the nails into His feet and hands, and the spear into His side. Grace "laid on Him the iniquities of us all," and made all the goodness and glory of God to pass before us in His life of toil, and His death of agony. He was "full of grace and truth," and so gloriously did it shine in all His actions, that no one could behold Him without being drawn unto Him by a silent, secret, mighty and irresistible power. It is this which charms men—captivates them and holds them spell-bound—the wondrous grace and goodness of our Heavenly Father, as revealed in Jesus, our King.

It is said of the Empress Josephine, that she was born to rule, and that in every action of her life, from the cradle to the grave, her queenly character was strikingly manifest. Careful observers of human nature prophesied of her even in her childhood, that she would be the Queen of France. Strangers drew back from her with signs of agitation, as from the presence of a superior being. There was a native dignity and grace in every step and every motion, which gave unmistakable evidence of her queenly character. Children, and servants, friends, and relatives, all acknowledged her authority and superiority, and gave her the willing obedience and homage of loving hearts. Similar to this, though in a higher and a holier sense, is the authority of Jesus. His yoke

is not a yoke of bondage, but a yoke of love. He has all power, but the only power He uses in His kingdom is the power of love. Men, weak men, who have no power except as it is given them from above, try to carry things by force, and found their kingdoms upon force, but He whose glory covers the heavens, and whose majesty is such that angels bow before Him, never attempts such folly, but with sweetest humiliation, and more than human tenderness, reasons, invites and pleads. He subdues, conquers, and binds men to Him by revealing love, manifesting grace. He has no slaves around His throne, and no unwilling subjects. Such is the love and devotion of His people, that if the throne of universal power were vacant, and they had the privilege of an election, they would place Him on that throne by acclamation, and without a dissenting voice.

Such is the mighty, all constraining power of grace. Reason says : “ It will encourage men in evil ; it will make sin seem a little thing ; you must hold up over men the idea of a God who is stern and revengeful. Pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon them ! Let the hot thunderbolts descend and crush them ! Let them be cursed in basket and store, in sickness and health, in life and death, in time and eternity.” Jesus says : “ Go to men and tell them of the love there is in Heaven for them. High above every other object, and glittering in the sunlight of the smiles of God, lift the blood-stained banner

of the cross.” “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”

Here, then, is the secret of the mighty power which this kingdom is exerting over the hearts and lives of men—the grace of God as revealed in Jesus.

The instrument of this power is the word, this everlasting word; but the *essence* of it is in Christ crucified. We point men not to reformation, self-development, or to any of the sickly sentimentalisms of modern reformers, but to the cross—the cross of Calvary, as the spring of every promise, source of every invitation, the starting point of love, life, liberty, and the blessed hopes of immortality and eternal glory. Here in the cross they may see all that they can desire—yea, more than in the highest flights of imagination they ever could conceive—of the boundless love and grace of this glorious kingdom.

The *spirituality* of this kingdom is another important characteristic of it. Invisible to the eye of sense, its glories and beauties are only apprehended by the higher faculties, the supernatural powers, when quickened and illumined by the Spirit. “The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit.” “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given.” There is a natural sense, and there is a spiritual sense—a lower range of faculties, and a higher. With the lower we take in the kingdoms of this world, and all

natural objects. With the higher, we take in the kingdom of Heaven, and objects invisible and supernatural.

In men who are unrenewed, unregenerate, having not the Spirit, these higher faculties are closed, dead, inactive. They see only with the lower. In fact, they never know the existence of any higher powers within them, or the joy which comes from their use, until they are renewed by the Lord himself. The man who always lives in the basement story of his house, can never have as broad a range of vision as he who goes up higher. His vision is limited. He cannot see afar off. All the distant portions of the landscape are hidden from him. His perception of objects without is determined by the position he occupies within the house. Just so the views you have of Christ and His kingdom depend entirely on the position of your spirit, and the faculties through which it looks. Look only through the darkened and depraved faculties of your animal nature, and you will see what any other animal may see. Look through the windows of reason, memory, and imagination, and you may see what infidels, philosophers, and scientific men, such as Parker, Strauss and Renan have seen. But if you would see Jesus,—if you would see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom, you must go up higher, and look through the windows of faith, hope and love.

These belong to our higher nature, our spiritual life. They take in Calvary, Heaven, the glorious future,

God, and Christ, and the mysteries of redeeming love, all of which are unknown, and as good as non-existent, to those who having eyes see not, and in whom the “god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.”

Three men were riding on horseback through a romantic country on a summer’s day. Their road wound up the side of a hill, and when they reached the summit a great range of country lay before them. They stopped to look at it. “What a splendid subject for a painting!” said one. “Do you see that little hill, with its dark clump of trees in shadow for the foreground, and that beautiful middle distance, with the winding and reaches of the stream, and the village roofs all glistening in the sunlight, and then that exquisite soft blue distance, and the pale mountains beyond?”

“I confess,” said the second, “I did not see your picture, but I was struck with the extraordinary geological character of the country, especially those terraces, one above the other, marking the heights at which the river used to stand.”

“And I,” said the third, “noticed neither, but I thought I had never seen a place better adapted for a military position. That opening in the hill is so defensible; those terraces are so adapted for batteries; nature has already made the works, which would require an army working for months to erect.”

Each saw what he had in his own mind, one being an artist, one a geologist, and the third a general, and what was visible to one was invisible to the others. We see, then, what we want to see, what we love most, and what our minds and hearts are fixed upon.

Go over the hills and through the forests with gun in hand, and no other end in view but to kill and bring home game, and you may see rabbits, terror-stricken and running for dear life across the meadows; squirrels seeking their holes in the ground, or leaping from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, affrighted; quails, pigeons, and birds of every variety of form, size and color, hastening away and hiding themselves, and you may bring home what you went for, but nothing more. Go again, with a higher purpose. Go with thought, reflection, and prayer to God for light and inspiration. Station yourself in the midst of the forest, and there listen, wait and watch, and all the hidden mysteries of nature will come to you, and reveal their beauties to you, and you will see what you have never seen before, and what is never revealed except to patient watching and waiting, and you will say with the poet,

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is a society where none intrudes,
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
Away from all I may be, or have been before,
And mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

Now, what is true of the kingdom of nature is also true of the kingdom of grace. *The outward sight depends upon the inward.* The objective kingdom is seen alone by those who have the kingdom of love within. “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

This kingdom is *immutable*. “Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably.”

Earthly governments are from their very nature mutable and temporary. They meet a present want, and pass away. They are often built on shaky bogs, and ever-shifting sands; and even those which are comparatively good, are full of imperfections. Originating in man, they partake of his nature, and are therefore perishable. This kingdom is from above, and not from beneath, from Heaven, and not from men.

The God of the Bible is the God of the universe, and He has said, “The gates of Hell shall not prevail” against this kingdom. All opposition then to the reign of our King is vain and ruinous.

“The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved,
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.” “The Lord

of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Devils may rage, but God reigns. The earth may be troubled, but Heaven retains its eternal tranquility. All the assaults of wicked men and devils have never caused the slightest change in the plans of Heaven, or the least anxiety in regard to their ultimate accomplishment. In calm, quiet, and majestic sovereignty the King of Heaven sits, looking down in pity on the vain attempts of those who, lashed to fury by their evil passions, raise their puny arms of rebellion against His throne. “He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh.”

“Vain sons of earth, attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains piled on mountains to the skies;
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.”

One important element of this stability is its righteousness. All the principles on which it is founded are pure and perfect. Its laws are in perfect accord with the eternal laws of truth. They are not like human statutes, true to-day and false to-morrow, applicable in one age and obsolete in another. They are true always, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, and among all nations, ages, and races of men. Can truth die? Can righteousness die? If not, then this kingdom cannot be destroyed, for it is founded on the everlasting principles of truth and righteousness.

Our Lord is not a usurper. His crown is not wrenched

from the grasp or stolen from the head of another. No marks of blood, or tears, the blood of the innocent, or the tears of widows and orphans, will ever be found upon His diadem, and no being will ever question His right or title to His throne. Righteous in itself, this kingdom or religion commends itself to the sense of righteousness which God has implanted in the breast of every rational creature. It lays hold of that part of our nature which is indestructible, the heart, the soul, the immortal and imperishable spirit. Human laws pertain to the outward life, these to the inward. Human laws reach the lower nature, the material and physical; these reach the higher and spiritual. Human laws pertain to the present, the visible, and the temporal; these to the unseen and eternal. Laying hold thus of that which is imperishable, though the subjects of this kingdom may die, the kingdom itself must from its very nature, be everlasting.

There is so much combustible material, so much that is of the earth, earthy and perishable, in all false systems of religion, that they cannot endure; they must die. Look into the hearts, and homes, and lives of those who oppose this kingdom—those who are outwardly moral, refined and intelligent, as well as those who are openly vile and sinful.”

See what antagonistic principles and opinions, no two agreeing upon any one thing! See the wrath, hate, malice, and all manner of evil affections which are

often covered up by an outside show of gentility! See the ignorance, error, superstition, oppression and cruelty in all false systems of religion, and then thank God for a kingdom of righteousness, peace and love; a religion which possesses such elements of harmony and stability, that it cannot be moved or shaken. Come on, ye powers of darkness! Come on, ye fiends of the pit! Hurl your darts! Scatter your fire-brands! Insinuate your doubts, and breathe your base suspicions!

“Zion stands with hills surrounded,
Zion kept by power divine;
All her foes shall be confounded,
Though the world in arms combine.
Happy Zion,
What a favored lot is thine.”

“No weapon formed against her shall prosper, and every tongue which rises up in judgment against her she shall condemn.” The stars may fall, the heavens be rolled up as a scroll, and the earth may reel and stagger as a drunken man; yea, all things material in the universe may be shaken down and overthrown, but one city will survive the ruin, one kingdom will emerge from the universal wreck.

III.

The coming of this kingdom is the coming of the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of Heaven, revising, reconstructing, pouring into the darkened minds of men,

its living streams of truth and love, sweeping away all barriers of prejudice and passion, and making all things new.

“Three rivers of fire,” says Paschal, “traverse the earth to consume and curse it; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” God sends from Heaven the river “whose streams make glad the city of our God,” to counteract their pernicious influence, and save poor, helpless, sin-cursed souls, who are struggling within their flaming waters, or borne down by them. Satan has unloosed the flood gates of sin, death and hell. Christ, our King, has opened the gates of bliss and glory, and through the Bible, the Sabbath, the ministry, all missionary societies, and all other means of grace, He is pouring light, and life, and love divine into the minds and hearts of men.

Such a kingdom ought to come, for all its principles are elevating, and ennobling. Let the children of Zion, the children of our Heavenly King, stand up then in the strength of God, and declare that what *ought* to come *must* come, and *shall* come. Those who are for us are more than those who are against us, and He who sits upon the throne, who was, and is, and is to come, is not an idle spectator. He sees, He hears, and He himself has taught us this petition. The struggle may be long, but victory is sure. History says so; experience says so; reason says so; conscience says so; God says so; and let

all the people say amen. Look then for the final triumph. Toil on, fight on, pray on, with your faces toward the sun.

Skeptical men, friends of progress and culture, speak in glowing terms of the humanitarian age, and of the signs which indicate its near approach. The Mohammedan looks for a kingdom of sensual delight. The Indian looks for the return of those who have gone into the unseen world, and hopes for better times and happier hunting grounds, than he has ever enjoyed.

Let us look for the coming of our King. Believe in His coming. Search the Scriptures for the promises and prophecies of this great event. Prepare the way, and let Him see that down deep in our hearts we desire His coming more than the coming of any earthly friend, or any creature good. Prepare the way *in your family*. Prepare the way *by helping others* in the church to which you belong. Prepare the way by *giving* to the cause of missions—Home and Foreign—and above all, prepare the way *in your own heart*.

From the souls of martyrs under God’s altar, from the smitten and afflicted church, tossed with tempests and not comforted, from pagans and savages, Mohammedans and Christians, from the votaries of true religion, false religion, and no religion, consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, the substance of this prayer is constantly ascending, “Thy kingdom come, Thy kingdom come.”

And it is coming; yea, the King himself is coming; coming with the years, coming with the months, coming with the weeks, days, minutes, coming with every heart throb; and He will never turn from His purpose, or cease from His work, till He has subdued all things to himself.

IV.

OUR FATHER'S WILL.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."—
MATT. vi : 10.

“OUR FATHER’S WILL.”

“My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home in life’s rough way,
O! teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done.

“Then when on earth I breathe no more,
The prayer half-mixed with tears before,
I’ll sing upon a happier shore,
Thy will be done.”

Miss Elliot.

Our Father has a kingdom among men. Do you wish to enjoy its peculiar blessings and privileges? Do you wish to have a place in it here and now, and a share in its coming glories and splendors? Then the question of supreme importance to you is, What is the Father’s will? Or, in other words, what are the laws and principles on which He is pleased to administer His government, and in accordance with which I must shape my life in order to win His favor?

Three common errors meet us here, into which we are liable to fall in the use of this petition. The first is the error or sin of irreverence, using the words of the prayer without thought or reflection.

Carelessness, rashness, and heedlessness, are very common sins in this fast age. Our activity, restlessness, and over-heated zeal, call for more of the wisdom which comes from above. Young America is in special need of counsel here, for where there is too much sail for the ballast, too much power for the strength of the machinery, there is certainly great danger of wreck and ruin.

To fix the attention on the inner life—the life of the soul—and hold it there, calmly watching, patiently waiting, and carefully trying all the secret springs of thought and feeling, is not an easy work; and so we shirk the duty, and rush into the presence of the Infinite and Eternal one, with no preparation, and no adequate conception of the solemn and momentous import of the language which we use.

Insincerity is another common error. There are many who put on the appearance of respect, and manifest great reverence in tone and manner, while the heart is wanting. They have a holy tone, a sanctimonious look, and a wonderful freedom in the use of cant phrases, but they lack that genuine love, that holy familiarity, which comes to God as to a dear and well-tried friend in confident expectation. They are like children who knock at the doors of houses and then run away. They repeat the words, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,” without a single thought of what the result would be if God should answer their petitions, and when if they would

express their real desires they would say, *my* kingdom come, and *my* will be done. They fill their minds and hearts with earthly treasures, lock the door and throw away the key, and then sit down complacently and say, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” If God answers such prayers, He must do it by great and terrible things which they look not for, by the fire and hammer of His word, or the fiercer fires of affliction.

Others divide the petition, take one-half and leave the other. They say, “Thy will be done,” while they omit the rule or standard by which we are to determine the nature of that will, viz: “as it is done in Heaven.” They consider the whole petition as having reference only to the duties of resignation, submission, endurance and patience. Now it is one thing *to suffer*, and another thing *to do* God’s will. Patience and conservatism make excellent ballast, but they never saved a sinking ship.

Is a tame submission to sin and error doing the will of God as it is done in Heaven? Are we to sit still and fold our hands, while oppression and cruelty, infidelity and intemperance prevail, while the malice of wicked men and devils threatens the destruction of everything good upon the earth? Is this to do His will as it is in Heaven? Is Heaven full of sin and sorrow, and are saints and angels suffering and enduring?

I. What, then, is this will; and

II. What is the meaning of this petition.

I.

The will of God, like the kingdom of God, has a two-fold aspect. There is a secret will and a revealed will. The one belongs exclusively to God, the other belongs to us and to our children.

The one is far above and out of our sight, infinite, eternal, unknown and incomprehensible; the other is made so plain and clear, that the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

The secret will of God “is His eternal purpose, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” It is the “path which no fowl knoweth.” It is the wonderful, mysterious book, written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals; the book which no man in Heaven, or earth, or under the earth, could open or read. It is the chain, the golden chain, which binds all beings and events to the throne of God. It is the plan which runs far down beneath all human plans and operations—in accordance with which *all things* are working; all things in nature and providence, law and gospel, working together in perfect harmony, though in seeming discord and confusion, working together for good, the highest possible good of them that love God. God has a plan, a purpose, a will—an infinite, eternal, unchangeable will. On that will all things in the universe depend, and as that will is holy,

the very thought of it ought to fill our hearts with joy and gladness, and cause us to unite with all the redeemed, and all the holy angels in crying : “ Alleluia ; blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.”

But the will with which we have to do especially, is what is called *His revealed will*. This will is included within the secret will, as a wheel within a wheel. In other words, it is that portion of God’s will which has respect especially to this world, and to human beings. It is a revelation of love, and a rule of duty. A single, definite, universal rule,—a rule of faith, and a rule of practice, and the only rule God has given to men “ to direct how we may glorify and enjoy Him.” It contains rich legacies, and points out clearly the conditions on which they may be secured. The clearest literal expression of this will is given in the Bible—the Old and New Testaments being but different parts of a single will.

When men are about to depart this life, in order to make sure of the execution of their purposes, or wishes, they record them in what is called their last will, or testament; a paper which is signed, sealed, and ratified in the presence of competent witnesses. So our Heavenly Father, in order to make His will more perfectly known to us, delivers it in covenants, writes it with His own

finger on tables of stone,—hands it down from Heaven amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, records and preserves it in the Holy Scriptures, and at last, in the presence of assembled multitudes of men and angels, seals and ratifies it with the blood of His own son.

A young man who had fallen heir to a large estate, was led about by friends to view his possessions; and as they took him from place to place, from house to house, from store to store, and from farm to farm, saying, “this is yours, and this, and this,” he was so completely overpowered that he died from excess of joy and surprise. Yet strange as it may seem, when we read this will of our Infinite Father, and tell men what it contains, we can scarcely get their attention for half an hour. Some treat it with utter contempt, some try to impeach it or contest it, charging our God with imbecility or insanity, and some declare the conditions unreasonable and impracticable.

Renan says our Lord was a very good man, but crazy, imagining that He was God, and that He had great honors and possessions to bestow on His favorites. So men treat this will. All its promises, they say, are fictitious, untrue, without foundation, and all the hopes we rest upon them are visionary, fantastic, utopian. Truth is so much stranger than fiction, the *verities* of God’s word so much more wonderful than the *vanities* of the world, that men *will not believe them*. Take this passage

of the will for instance, in Matthew ix : 13, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” It is a quotation from Hosea vi : 6. It was a favorite with our Lord, and if we had the roll of parchment which He used, we would doubtless find it marked. When they condemned Him for eating with publicans and sinners, He said, “Go and learn what that meaneth ; I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” Again, when they condemned Him for breaking the Sabbath, He said, “If ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”

All through the ages, God’s ministers have been trying to show men what this mercy is, how abundant, full, free and everlasting. The Old Testament and the New are full of its promises and invitations, still men ridicule and despise it.

The history of this world is filled with demonstrations of this mercy. The church of God is filled with saved sinners, penitent sinners, pardoned sinners, such as David, Saul, Peter, the publican, the thief, Augustine, Newton, Bunyan, and a host of others, who have proved this truth by their own experience, yet men will not believe it. And last of all, the greatest, the most wonderful and amazing expression of love and mercy is held before them, even the death of God the Son, on Calvary, and yet men ridicule and despise this will, and tell us it is nothing to them.

Again, take this passage in Matthew viii : 14 : “It is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish.” Here is our Father’s will respecting little children. It is in perfect harmony with those other blessed words of our blessed Lord, “Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” We see now why the great majority of the people of this world die in infancy and childhood. God wants them in His glorious kingdom above, and in order to make sure of them, He takes them away in their beauty and purity. There are hundreds of millions of little children in Heaven, and the number is constantly increasing. They are safe forever. They are at rest forever,

‘ Free from temptation and from sin,
With God eternally shut in.”

Never again will they weep, or suffer, sin, or die. When the murderous Athaliah was destroying, or trying to destroy, all the children of the royal family, and the shrieks and groans of the innocent victims were ringing in the ears of the frightened populace, God saved the little prince Joash, by hiding him in the temple. So now, while sin is doing its work of death, poisoning some, starving some, and piercing others through and through with the sword of error, He saves a vast multitude by gathering them into His glorious temple above, where profanity, drunkenness, Sabbath desecration, and the sins which afflict and grieve us can never enter.

You who are bereaved, whose hearts are burdened, wounded, stricken and bleeding, who feel that a part of your own life has been taken from you, and that your earthly home must henceforth be desolate, look not down into the cold, dark grave, thinking only of your loss, and refusing to be comforted: Look up, rather, to the bright world where your children rejoice in light and joy unspeakable. Hear them sing the songs of Paradise! See their heads all crowned with glory and honor! Rejoice with them, sing with them, and praise God with them for His infinite goodness in taking them from the evil to come.

“I look around and see
The evil ways of men;
And O! beloved child,
I’m more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

“The little hands that clasped me,
The innocent lips that pressed,
Would they have been as pure
Till now, as when of yore,
I lulled thee on my breast?”

Right here, in connection with this, it may be well for us to read another blessed revelation of our Father’s will, such as this: “He doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men;” or this: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” or the last, grand invitation, “Whosoever will

him let him come and take of the water of life freely.’ Read all these promises of pardon, justification, adoption, peace and Heaven. Read of the things which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.” Read of the place, the people, the employments, the enjoyments, the perfection and the glory of the eternal world, and then tell me if our Father’s will is not good and favorable, grand and glorious, beyond the power of mind to think, or tongue to express.

O ! blessed will ! O ! glorious will ! How would the darkness of this earth be scattered, and the sorrow of this earth be healed, if in the hearts and homes of men this will were known and loved !

“ I worship Thee sweet will of God,
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I learn
To love Thee more and more.”

II.

To do the will of God involves acquiescence, simple, loyal, trustful acquiescence. This grace is often mistaken for simple submission. “ Was your wife resigned ? ” said a believer to his friend, whose wife had recently been called away. “ Of course, she was ; she *had* to be,” was the answer. That was his idea of resignation.

“I have been thinking of our situation,” said a young wife to her husband, “and I am determined to be submissive.” They had lost their only child; the husband had been obliged to resign his pastoral charge on account of ill health, and the wife had temporarily lost the use of her eyes. The case seemed hard, and it appeared a triumph even to submit. But the husband replied, “let us see what we have to submit to. I will make a list of our trials. First, we have a home; we will submit to that. Secondly, we have the comforts of life; we will submit to that. Thirdly, we have each other. Fourthly, we have a multitude of friends. Fifthly, we have a God to take care of us.” “Stop, stop,” said the wife, “I will say no more about submission.” Add to your submission, faith; to faith, hope; and to hope, joy; and then you have a resignation or an acquiescence in the will of God, similar to that of our Lord himself. See Him as He comes, saying, “Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will, O! God.” See Him as He lays aside the riches, honors, and glories of Heaven, and becomes poor for us. See Him as a poor man, a day laborer. See Him hungry, thirsty, and without where to lay His head. See Him despised, rejected, spit upon and buffeted. See Him in Gethsemane, and remember that in all this there was not resignation simply, but joyous acquiescence.

The first step towards this acquiescence is submission. The human will is a fortress, surrounded with intrench-

ments, walls, ditches, and fortifications innumerable. The work of the sinner before conversion is a work of constant resistance until this fortress is taken. “God did a part, and I did a part,” said a man in relating his experience. “Well, and what did you do?” said a friend. “Why, I resisted and fought against Him with all my might, and He did the rest,” was the reply. This dreadful resistance of the will of man to the will of God, the human will to the divine, is dangerous work. Angels, the rebel angels, dared to resist God’s will, and Peter tells us the result. God “spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” Our first parents resisted His will, and the result we know to our sorrow. Out of their Eden, out of their happy home, they were driven into a wilderness of sorrow, regret and despair. Pharaoh defied the power of the Almighty, placed himself in direct opposition and resistance to His will, and the result was a most terrible overthrow and ruin. Sennacherib defied the armies of the living God, and tried to hinder the accomplishment of His will, and the destruction of his host gave another demonstration of the sin and folly of such unequal warfare. Examples of the guilt and danger of such resistance are innumerable. The dying Altamont exclaimed, “I have been too strong for Omnipotence! I plucked down ruin! Hold! hold! you wound me! This is the

rock on which I split—I denied His name. O! time! time! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled forever! A month! O! for a single week! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do.”

And now let us turn to something brighter: The blessedness of those who do His will, or seek to do it, as it is done in Heaven. The secret of all genuine success in life is found just here, in the language of our text, “Thy will be done.” “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” says the apostle, and sanctification means holiness, happiness, Heaven. God wills your eternal salvation. This is the single scope of all His plans, and the grand, leading, guiding purpose of all the dispensations of His providence and grace. Put your soul in His hand, as you put your body in the hands of a skillful, kind physician, and though He may give you bitter pills and loathsome potions, cross your will, deny you many sweetmeats, and appoint strict diet, active, laborious exercise, and total abstinence from all intoxicants—yea, though He may apply plasters, and corrosives, the lance or the knife, the result will be life, health, and joy e’ernal.

Hear the experience of a happy young convert: “I have been in great trouble, but I am happy now. I saw an immense mountain, with precipitous sides, up which I endeavored to climb; but when I had attained a con-

siderable height, I lost my hold and fell to the bottom. Exhausted with perplexity and fatigue, I went to a distance and sat down to weep, and while weeping I saw a drop of blood fall on the mountain, and in a moment it was dissolved and washed away.”

Trying to win salvation in our own way, and according to our own will, is like trying to climb straight up the side of an impassable mountain. It is all labor in vain—taking much pains to no purpose. Give up this vain effort and say, “Thy will, not mine be done,” and the mountain is removed, and the way is plain and simple. Look at the standard, “as it is done in Heaven.” “What is to be done?” said a Sunday school teacher to his class; and the answer came, “The will of God.” “And where?” “On earth.” “And how?” “As it is in Heaven.” “And how do you think the angels and happy spirits do the will of God in Heaven?” The first child said, “immediately;” the second, “they do it diligently;” the third, “they do it always;” the fourth, “with all their hearts,” and the fifth, “they do it all together.” Here a pause ensued, and it seemed as if the answers were all in, and the subject exhausted. But at length a timid little girl arose and said, “why, sir, they do it without asking any questions.” Immediately; diligently; always; heartily; all together; and without asking any questions.

This is the divine standard—the standard of Heaven;

and the all-controlling power by which the angels reach this standard, is the power of love. Love does not grumble. Love does not seek for spots and blemishes, and imperfections in the character of God, or the will of God. Love is not selfish, blind, or bigoted. Love “seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” All things are against her in this world, but she endures, conquers, and overcomes them all. Love does not give as if she was giving up the ghost—she gives liberally, “good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over,” breaking the alabaster box and pouring forth the ointment, even as the Lord himself poured forth His blood for the life of the world.

Many do God’s will because they are obliged to ; because salvation hangs upon it, or because they fear the horrors of an eternal hell if they refuse, and resist His will. They say in their hearts, “This religion is very expensive. It deprives me of a great deal of pleasure, and costs a great deal of time, labor and money ; but I must hold on—I must hold on, for there’s no other way. If I hadn’t joined the church, and taken the vows of God upon me, I might have gone to the ball-room, the theater, or to other places of amusement, and nobody would have said anything ; but now I am watched by the church, and watched by the world, and in hot water

all the time. But, then, it's the only way ; I must follow on, and go to church occasionally, just enough to keep up my connection, for if I should give up altogether, I should lose my hope of Heaven." O! that they were wise! O! that they could know the *great secret* of living by faith, walking by faith, and working by faith. O! that they might realize the blessedness of losing ones own will in the loving will of God, the love and joy unspeakable which flow into the hearts of those whom He makes willing in the day of His power.

Ask of the flowers what they are doing, and they will tell you, "The will of God." Is it a sad thing, a gloomy thing, for them to come up out of the cold, damp earth, and out of the cold, dead, dormant state in which they have been lying all winter, and unfold their leaves and petals in the soft, warm summer air ?

Ask of the fishes of the sea, or the fowls of the air, what they are doing, and they will tell you, "The will of God." Is it hard for them to fulfil the law of their being, and to live and move in the element which God has created for them, and would they be happy out of that element ?

Ask of the stars,

"Forever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine,"

what they are doing, and they will tell you, "The will of God."

Go thus throughout the universe, and outside of earth, and hell, men and devils, where can you find a creature, rational or irrational, which is not doing the will of God, and in so doing finding its highest happiness. I beseech you then, as you love your soul, and desire its salvation, first of all *to give up your own will*. It is selfish, blind, evil, and only evil, and it *must be surrendered, must be given up*. Yield the fortress; abandon it forever; make the surrender complete. Say not “I will follow Thee, *but*, or I will follow Thee, *if*.” God wants an unconditional surrender of heart and life to Him. Take your *mind* and let Him fill it with truth, the everlasting truth of God’s eternal word. Correct your estimates of things divine. Get right views of God, of Christ, and of Heaven. Think, reflect, reason. Go over the whole subject of religion. Examine well all the evidences, all the grounds of the christian faith. Think of all the promises and threatenings which hang upon God’s everlasting will, and remember that “God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent.”

Then take your *heart*, and let Him fill it so full of love divine, that there shall be no room for evil affections. Go to the everlasting throne and seek the fire of the Spirit, to kindle the flame of pure devotion, and swell the tide of love! Pray! Pray! Pray because God wills that you should pray. Pray because the Spirit prompts you to pray. Pray because the noblest aspira-

tions of your nature are choked and smothered, when you refuse to pray. Pray, because you are not a stock or a stone, or a dull, insensate clod, but a free, intelligent, rational and immortal being, with powers angelic and divine. Pray, because the neglect of prayer is unnatural and sinful, a contempt of God and a degradation of your own nature. And in all your prayers remember the model : Thy name, Thy kingdom, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

V.

OUR FATHER'S BREAD.

“ Give us this day our daily bread.”—MATT. vi : 11.

“OUR FATHER’S BREAD.”

“ All these mouths we cannot feed,
And we cannot clothe these bodies.”
Well, if man’s so hard indeed,
Let them learn at least what God is!
If no better can be done, ‘
Let us do but this—endeavor
That the Sun behind the sun
Shine upon them while they shiver.”

From Mrs. Browning’s “ Song for the Ragged Schools.”

Our daily bread is the gift of God. No truth is more clearly revealed than this, and there is none which men are more liable to forget. Some depend upon their physical strength. “My wife trusts in God,” said an unbeliever, “but I trust in these,” holding up his strong hands. Others depend upon their skill, their ability to make money. Others still upon their wealth, looking proudly upon their great possessions.

God says to such “Beware lest thou say in thine heart, *my power*, and the might of *mine hand*, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the *Lord thy God*, for He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

Our text directs us above all second causes, and teaches us to look to the “Father of our spirits, and former of our bodies,” as the author of all our mercies, temporal as well as spiritual. “Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.” “*He* causeth His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust.” “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and the herbs for the service of man.” “These all wait upon *Thee*. Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou makest it soft with showers; Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.” These, and many other passages of Scripture teach us that our bread comes not from the baker, the miller, the farmer, the ground, or any other earthly source, but from God.

Let us use this petition

- I. In its literal sense ;
- II. In its spiritual sense ; and
- III. Notice some limitations or restrictions.

I.

Our Lord here teaches us to pray for material blessings, for the supply of all our temporal wants.

We are to pray for bread, our daily bread; not to *demand*

but *pray* for it. We are to recognize God as the author of our physical, as well as our spiritual life. He is the “God that made the world and all things.”

First, we are to seek His glory, then the satisfaction of our wants. One of the marks of anti-Christ is the neglect of the human and the material. It is a religion for monks, priests, hermits, nuns, and not for toiling, suffering men, women and children. In this world body and soul are united. As the body cannot work well when the mind is depressed, so the mind cannot work easily and freely when the body is sick, inflamed, drowsy or exhausted. God recognizes this fact, and so provides for the body. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read that God provided the cereals, corn, wheat, barley, rice, etc., as a special gift for man—a special provision for the wants of his physical nature. “Behold,” He says, “I have given you every herb bearing seed.”

There is no trace of the cereals in all the geological periods, until we come to the human epoch. Man’s table was spread, and his food prepared and ready for him, when he came. In some form or other, this gift of God may be found in every portion of the habitable globe: rice in the tropics, wheat in the temperate zone, corn in our own land, and rye, oats and barley in the colder climates. “Verily thou shalt be fed,” is a promise which never fails, when the conditions of the promise are fulfilled. “While the earth remaineth, seed time and

harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.”

There is nothing more noticeable in the life of our Lord, than His tender care, and thoughtful provision for all the temporal wants of His people. He is the same to-day, the same in His love, His care, and power to save. His triumph over death and hell, His resurrection and ascension, have only changed His position, adding boundless power to His boundless love.

II.

But we do not see the beauty or force of this petition, until we use it spiritually and figuratively.

When the infidel astronomer looks into the heavens, he beholds nothing but masses of dull, dead, insensate matter. He can see nature, but the Lord of nature he cannot see. He can see the glory and beauty of the material, in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in the harmony of rolling worlds, in planets, comets, suns and systems, but the glory of the spiritual is forever hidden from him. He knows something of the magnitude of these bright, shining orbs of light, which glitter far away in the blue ether, their number, their peculiar nature and splendor, the velocity with

which they move, their annual and diurnal motions, but of the living persons who dwell therein, he knows nothing. To the simple-minded believer these rolling orbs are palaces of pure delight, the abodes of innocence and purity, peopled with intelligences as loyal to God as the worlds which they inhabit, to the suns around which they revolve. And sometimes when the lights are out, and the streets are empty, and the din of the world is hushed, when Heaven is nearest, and the world is farthest, he hears angelic voices such as John heard on the isle of Patmos, or the shepherds as they watched their flocks on the first glad Christmas eve. He may know less of their physical structure, but his interest is vastly greater, for in them he sees the mansions of his Father’s house, where dwell his brethren and sisters, the loved ones who have gone before, the ministering spirits to whom he is bound by the strongest ties of nature and affection; and in one of these worlds is the glorified body of his Lord, the “friend who sticketh closer than a brother,” dearer to him than life, to whom he is united, and from whom he receives all needed blessings.

So the unbeliever may see in this petition a simple desire for bread, corruptible bread—the bread that perishes, and nothing more. He has no relish for spiritual food. His higher nature has not been quickened and made alive by the Spirit, and hence he has no hungering and thirsting after righteousness, no deep and

abiding consciousness of his poverty and want, no earnest longing of the heart for Christ. He is conscious at times that there is something wanting, for there is a void or vacuum in his nature which he cannot fill with husks, but he knows not that the one thing needful is the bread of Heaven.

Two men were once arguing about immortality : Mr. A. trying to convince Mr. B. that there was such a thing, and Mr. B. not being able to believe it. At last, after a long conversation, Mr. B. took his hat and departed. Mr. A. sat in his chair, thinking, and at last fell asleep. He dreamed that he was walking in the Mammoth Cave, tumbling along through its avenues and recesses, until he came to a river. Here two little fishes put up their heads, and said : " Mr. A., Mr. A., do you really believe there is such a thing as sunlight? We hear those who go through this cave talking about sunlight, but we do not believe in it." So Mr. A. stopped and argued with them, quoted all authorities on optics, expounded the laws of refraction, and reflection, and even pulled a prism from his pocket to explain the prismatic rays. " Why," said he, " without light how could we do anything? How could we read, or work, or play, or distinguish the colors and forms of flowers, or the faces of our friends--and of what use would our eyes be?" " But we haven't any eyes," said the two little fishes. And so to be sure it was ; they had no eyes.

How can a man who was born blind, and whose eyes have never been opened, get a correct idea of sunlight? And how can an unbeliever get a correct idea of spiritual bread, the bread which cometh down from Heaven?

To the genuine believer, however, this word bread is most wonderfully comprehensive and expressive. It speaks of Jesus as a soul-satisfying Savior; for as bread is what a man wants when he is hungry, instead of luxuries, dainties, and sweetmeats, so Jesus, and Jesus only, can satisfy a soul when awakened and convicted. He satisfies the intellect by answering questions which philosophers of old, and men of all ages, have tried in vain to solve. He satisfies the conscience by making an atonement for our sin, and He satisfies the heart by giving in His person, and His work, all, and more than all that men or angels ever have conceived in their highest flights of thought, their profoundest research, or broadest range of inquiry, as a full, complete, and perfect expression of the love of God to man.

It is said that the tail of a comet is so light and unsubstantial, that a thousand square miles of it may be compressed into a single square inch. Just so light, empty and airy, are the beautiful theories of men. You might as well attempt to satisfy a hungry lion with a single drop of blood drawn from your finger with a needle, as to try to satisfy a soul, an immortal soul, when once thoroughly awakened to a sense of its need, with human opinions and speculations.

“None but Christ to me be given,
None but Christ in earth or Heaven,”

is the universal cry of souls whose real wants have been revealed.

Again, bread speaks of Christ as a life-giving Savior. There is a universal desire for stimulants—something to intoxicate, or excite. Four hundred millions of our race are opium eaters. One hundred millions victims of the betel nut, which has accursed the East Indies. Three hundred millions chew hashish, in Persia, Brazil, and Africa. The Mexicans use agave, and the people of Guerapa something intoxicating from the sugar cane, while millions in our own land, and other lands, use the most deadly and destructive of all stimulants, the hot, fiery, flesh-poisoning, mind-blasting, soul-destroying alcohol. Whence comes this strange, unnatural thirst, this universal desire for something to excite and vivify? A thousand causes may be mentioned. But back of all is the sense of emptiness, and restlessness, and universal heart-hunger, which comes from the loss of God, the loss of the Spirit.

Every kind of life has its appropriate element, or living principle, on which it feeds, and from which it draws its sustenance. Take away that element, or principle, and what is left? Take away the great life-principle of the human body, which glistens in the eye, glows in the face, whispers or thunders in the voice, leaps in the

pulse, rages in the tumult of passion, and smiles on the peaceful sea when the storm is over, and what is the result? A breaking down of all the physical faculties, a collapse of all the physical powers. So when the great life-principle of the soul is wanting, when the glory of man has departed, the temple is left in ruins, and the life of man is but a living death—full of all manner of unnatural longings, and corrupt desires.

This bread of Heaven removes all these unnatural cravings, by giving us new life. Union to Christ, or communion with Christ, brings everlasting life. Religion is life—life from the dead, life in the midst of death, and when this life comes into a soul, and its strong, deep, mighty current fills, and moves, expands and ennobles all its powers, all low, vile passions, all sensual and devilish passions are expelled. Pour water into a vessel which contains nothing but air, and the air is expelled. Pour in melted lead, and the water is expelled. So when the blessed Spirit pours into our hearts the great, deep, precious truths respecting Christ and His salvation, all light and frothy views and feelings are expelled, “old things pass away, and all things become new.”

He who has this life,—this everlasting life, needs no other stimulant. He is a new man, new in every part of his complex being, raised to a higher plane, moving in a purer element, and clothed with all the strength,

majesty, and glorious beauty of the perfect life of God. He has new thoughts, new feelings, new purposes for action, and a new love-nature.

He has burst forth from the chrysalis state, and just begun to think and feel like a living man. He has learned the great secret of living by faith. Opening communication with Heaven, feeding by faith upon this heavenly manna, he is ennobled and exalted by the all-pervading, and all-animating Spirit of the living God. By a divine and heavenly impulse, a power above his own, he is lifted out of the deep, impassable ruts of sinful habit into which he had fallen, into a higher and a better life, feeble in its beginnings, but brightening and expanding to everlasting day.

As bread is one of the common gifts of God, within reach of all classes, and congenial to all appetites, so the bread of Heaven is adapted to all classes, grades and ranks of society. No man, or class of men, can monopolize it. "Christ died for all." "By the grace of God, He tasted death for every man." "The Spirit and the Bride say come, and whosoever will let him come." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life."

Richard Baxter declared that if God had said "there was mercy for Richard Baxter," he would have thought it meant some other person of the same name; but

“*whosoever*” meant himself,—the worst of all Richard Baxters.

Martin Luther said that the story of God’s love was so good, that it was fit to carry on one’s knees all the way from Rome to Jerusalem.

Tell it out among the heathen, and all around the earth, at home and abroad, in the field and by the way-side, through Hindoo jungles, and Brazilian groves, the ice-clad hills of Greenland, and the islands of the sea, that in our Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare.

III.

Our Father’s bread must be sought by the use of appropriate means.

God gives liberally, but He does not give without discrimination. No man can sit still, and linger out a life of indolence and imbecility, and then expect the blessings of Heaven to come to him. If you would have the treasures of the deep, and the fruits of the field, or the gold and silver of the mines, you must seek them; and if you would have God’s bread, either temporal or spiritual, you must fulfill the conditions on which His bread is given. God can feed His people when He pleases, and where He pleases. He can open fountains in deserts, change stones to bread, or send

them manna direct from Heaven. But this is not the method which He has been pleased in general to adopt. He has appointed certain times, and places, for the dispensation of His bread, and he who has the spirit of adoption will have regard to his Father’s will, and seek for bread in His appropriate way. He will wish to be where Christ is, and where the Spirit reigns, in his Father’s house, among his Father’s children, and at his Father’s table. No other place, however attractive, can ever satisfy him, for no other place has such associations, so perfectly in harmony with his inner life and feelings.

He, then, who on some bright, beautiful Sabbath morning, offers this petition, “Give us this day our daily bread,” and then instead of going to the house of God, roams forth to find his own pleasure, and do his own works, makes the fulfillment of God’s promise of bread to him impossible. “Give us *this day*,” suggests also our daily dependence.

“Day by day the manna fell;
Oh, to learn this lesson well!
Still by constant mercy fed,
Give us, Lord! our daily bread.”

We know not what a day may bring forth, and as we look into the future, doubt and distrust bring terrible forebodings, and we draw back from the work assigned us, demanding strength for the whole journey before we are willing to attempt the duties of to-day. But the

future is wisely hidden from us. Our Father holds the loaf in His own hand. He gives us bread ; just what we need, and when we need it.

Is the present a day of temptation, a day of suffering, or a day of active service? Then remember the promise, “As thy days so shall thy strength be.” Day by day bread shall be given you. Day by day your path will brighten, until at length the perfect day shall come, the day which to the believer is better than the birth-day, better than the wedding-day, the glorious day of victory and coronation, when you shall “hunger no more, neither thirst any more,” when

“You shall see, and hear, and know
All that your soul desired below;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.”

VI.

OUR FATHER'S FORGIVENESS.

THE
BIBLE

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."—
MATT. vi : 12.

“OUR FATHER’S FORGIVENESS.”

“ We stand in deep repentance
Before Thy throne of love ;
O God of grace forgive us ;
The stain of guilt remove.
Behold us while with weeping
We lift our eyes to Thee ;
And all our sins subduing,
Our Father, set us free.”

Ray Palmer.

This petition breathes the spirit of genuine repentance.

There is confession and trust, filial fear, and fraternal love ; and in each of these exercises of mind and heart, there are feelings and affections which none but a child of God can understand.

It is very easy to use the first part of this petition, very difficult to add the last.

There is no man living who does not wish to have his debts paid, or his sins forgiven.

Men wish to be forgiven, or at least are very *willing* to be forgiven, provided it can be done in a way of their own choosing, and in accordance with their own ideas of righteousness.

They can say “Forgive us, forgive us,” but the forgiveness which they seek is very different from that which God proposes to give. They ask God to forgive without penitence or submission, or a life of love and trust.

They ask Him to cancel all their debts, and still permit them to go on in sin, squandering His gifts with reckless profusion, regardless of all obligations, and heaping up a greater and still greater debt.

Our text asks God to *forgive as we forgive*: not as a tyrant forgives, not as the selfish, sordid, miserly and unmerciful sons of earth forgive, but as *we* forgive, we who are the children of the kingdom, we whose hearts are renewed and softened by the grace of God, and to whom all hard and unforgiving thoughts are as unnatural as they are sinful.

In the mouth of a self-righteous man, these words are utterly out of place. Why should he ask for pardon, when his life is perfect? What need has he of forgiveness when he has no sin?

In the mouth of a selfish and unmerciful man, these words are blasphemous. He asks God to exercise towards him the same unkind, illiberal and unforgiving spirit which he feels towards his fellow men. He takes his debtor by the throat, casts him into prison, declares he shall not come out till he has paid the uttermost farthing, and then dares to go into the presence of God and say, “Forgive as I forgive.” What blasphemy!

May God deliver us from such a spirit, and from the terrible results of a wrong use of these words!

In the mouth of a penitent sinner (which is the best definition of a true believer,) these words are a prayer for pardon, peace, and eternal life, not only for himself, but for all who possess a similar spirit, and are therefore in a condition which makes it proper for our Heavenly Father to bestow such blessings.

Using this petition as a model, as the natural expression of a penitent sinner’s heart, we may notice —

- I. Our confession ;
- II. Our plea ;
- III. The standard here suggested, by which we may determine the genuineness of our repentance.

I.

Our confession.

Whenever we come to God, the confession of sin must form a prominent part of our worship. He who comes without confession, is like the proud, self-righteous Pharisee, utterly ignorant of his own heart, and living in a state of self-deception.

The man who says, “I never use this petition, never make confession of sin, because I never sin,” sits in judgment on the Son of God, and charges Him with

having made a grievous blunder when He gave this model prayer for the use of His disciples.

In the Old Testament dispensation, every male of the Jews was ordered to stand on a given day in each year, and with a loud voice, declare these words: “A Syrian, ready to perish, was my father;” and whenever the Hebrew came to the Tabernacle, or Temple, to worship, he came with an offering, an animal carefully chosen, without blemish, and of proper age, and as he approached the altar of sacrifice, he laid his hand upon the head of the offering, thereby signifying confession of sin, and acceptance of God’s way of atonement.

As the victim fell under the sacrificial knife, struggling, bleeding, dying, the worshipper acknowledged that he himself deserved to die. He confessed his sin, his helplessness, and his ill-desert.

Coming in any other way, without confession, was coming in the way of Cain, the way of the liar, the murderer, and the hypocrite, the way of unbelief, of rebellion and defiance.

So now, the accepted worshipper comes with the consciousness of sin, and the confession of sin. The language of his heart is expressed in the beautiful hymn of Watts, which says:

“My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine:
While like a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin.”

This word "debts," is one of the many which the inspired writers have used to express the number, the magnitude, and the nature of our sins.

It is a figurative expression, representing sin as a debt. According to our catechism, sin is any "want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God." The same idea is expressed in the Bible, in these words : "All unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law." Everything in the universe is under law. As our bodies are under physical laws, so our souls are under spiritual and moral laws. All these laws are condensed by our Lord, and expressed in these simple, clear, and beautiful words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

What could be more reasonable and natural! What more unreasonable and unnatural than its opposite! Yet where is the man, woman, or child, who will dare to claim the fulfilment of this law?

Human laws reach only the outward conduct, God's law reaches the heart.

Take this standard, this perfect standard of God's spiritual law; look into this mirror, this mirror of the Gospel, and see how it levels pride, and cuts up folly by the roots.

See how every mouth is stopped, and how hopeless

and helpless is the condition of the man who trusts to his own righteousness !

See the *number* of our sins—more than the hairs of our head. See the *magnitude* of our sins—infinite upon infinite, infinite upon infinite. No line can fathom their depths, and no created intelligence can fix the bounds or limits of their guilt and turpitude.

See the *evil nature* of sin, and what God thinks of it. It is rebellion, robbery, filthiness, a disease, a scarlet-dyed stain, a leprosy, loathsome, infectious, and incurable. It is the sting of death. It is the fire of hell—a fire unquenchable. It is a private interest against the public good. It is the enemy of God and man. It takes the sceptre out of the hand of God, and puts it in the hand of Satan. It hurled the first-born sons of God from Heaven, and locked them up in a prison of despair; turned our first parents out of Eden, and changed this world from a paradise to a wilderness of sorrow, agony, tears, and death.

It is the abominable thing which God hates—

“The boundless upas, the all-blasting tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see,
And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
The unmedicable soul with heart-aches ever new.”

But what makes sin especially hateful in the eyes of

all the good, is the fact that it has crucified the Son of God.

See Him, the best, the kindest, the loveliest of beings, waylaid, mocked, bruised, beaten, falsely condemned, dying in agony, with all comforts denied Him, and all the indignities which satanic malice could invent, heaped upon Him, and then tell me if sin is not an evil, and a bitter thing!

See Him bearing His cross, staggering beneath the load, crying aloud “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me,” and then tell me what it is to be a sinner, an unpardoned sinner, under the wrath and curse of an offended God!

Sit down now in the light of the cross, and read these words, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. There is not a just man on earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.”*

We are in debt—hopelessly in debt. When a man takes property which belongs to another, and which has been entrusted to his care, and uses it as if it were his own, and as if he had a right to use it as he pleased, without regard to the wishes of the owner, he becomes indebted to the owner of the property. He is responsible for the use he makes of whatever is entrusted to his charge, and if he squanders it, or loses it in speculation, he is bound by law to make amends.

So, when a man has taken God’s mercies, the innumerable mercies of God, such as food, raiment, health, strength, earthly homes, earthly relationships, and all those useful and necessary things which delight the senses, and gratify the mind: when a man takes all these, and squanders them upon his lusts, making no return of gratitude, love, or service, he is under condemnation. Or, to use the figure of our text, he is in debt, under the heavy burden of a debt he can never pay, and whenever he thinks of this debt he is troubled.

Day and night, sleeping or waking, he is harrassed and tortured, and like the Psalmist cries, “Have mercy upon me O God, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.”

II.

Our plea is for pardon and forgiveness. Our only ground of hope is in the mercy of God. We cannot justify ourselves, we cannot merit salvation. We cannot deny, or conceal, or make atonement. Our only plea is mercy—

“Mercy alone can meet my case,
For mercy, Lord, I cry;
Jesus, Redeemer, show Thy face
In mercy, or I die.”

And now comes in the grand distinguishing truth of

the Bible—the great fact that God can pardon sin.

This is the truth which charms us, captivates us, fills our hearts with adoring gratitude, and fills all Heaven with praise.

Natural religion gives no hope of pardon, no promise of forgiveness. Natural law is inexorable, merciless. He who violates natural law can never escape its penalty.

If I thrust my hand into the fire, I am burned. If I jump from the house-top, I am dashed to death. Poison kills, and gravity never loses its grasp for a moment. The deviation of a planet a single inch from the path its law marks out, would bring the most disastrous consequences.

Reasoning from analogy, men hold that God cannot forgive sin. But hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth! Here is the great mystery of godliness—God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” “He was made sin for us who knew no sin.” “He bore our sin in His own body on the tree.” “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.”

Herein is love—love unparalleled and unspeakable, and through this wondrous work of mediation and redemption, the God of the universe can forgive sin.

What is the meaning of the promise made to our first parents? What is the meaning of the ceremonial law? What is the meaning of the institutions of religion? What is the meaning of the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord’s supper, and what is the meaning of this model prayer? Why are we taught to pray “forgive us, forgive us,” if God cannot forgive, and if every man must suffer the penalty of violated law?

Our God is merciful, our God forgives sin. He is a God who delights in pardon.

Read the promises; read the invitations; see the course of treatment which He adopts towards sinners.

See Him as He comes, and suffers, and dies! See Him sending forth His messengers to proclaim salvation! See Him exalted, and for what? “To give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.”

Hear Him saying, “I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions.”

Think of the multitude of forgiven sinners on earth and in Heaven, and then cry “Hallelujah!” “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”

Our Father’s forgiveness is *free, full, everlasting and immediate.*

1. He forgives *freely*, voluntarily, because He delights

to forgive, and because an unforgiving spirit is entirely foreign to His nature.

The work of Christ, instead of changing God, or buying Him over to pardon, was the natural expression of the Father’s heart, the overflowing of infinite love and mercy.

2. He forgives *fully*. He does not say, “I forgive, but I cannot forget,” or, “I forgive, but I hope I shall never see you again.” He cancels the entire debt, interest and all, and then accepts the debtor as a friend and brother.

3. He forgives *forever*. He does not forgive for a few days or weeks, cherishing His grudges, hugging to His breast His red-hot, blistering resentments, with the intention of taking revenge at some time in the future.

He forgives forever, never again to mention the debt, or cherish an unkind thought concerning it.

4. He forgives *immediately*. History tells of men who have walked barefooted, clothed with sack-cloth, and with ropes around their necks, day after day before the door of a king’s palace, suing for pardon, begging for mercy, and yet making no impression on the hard heart of their sovereign.

Our God never keeps His penitent children waiting thus in agony and suspense. He marks the very first tear, hears the first sigh, sees the prodigal a great way off, and comes immediately to his help. Yea, he even goes before us, and with multitudes of daily mercies,

innumerable arguments, and loving messages of persuasive love, seeks to melt our hearts, and prepare us for the act of pardon.

Men say “it will be soon enough to talk of forgiveness when the offender comes and asks such favor.” “But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet *sinner*s Christ died for us.”

But while we rejoice in the fact that God is merciful, it is well for us to remember that He does not pardon indiscriminately.

As in all human governments, the indiscriminate exercise of pardoning power has been followed with most disastrous results, so in the government of God, if pardon were always extended to the guilty, without regard to the conditions of penitence and faith, the law would be of no effect.

There are times when the exercise of this power seems most desirable, and when the finest feelings of our nature would be outraged by a refusal on the part of one in authority to exercise this great prerogative. But on the other hand, suppose all our prisons and penitentiaries to be opened, and all the criminals to be turned loose to rob, murder, and destroy, how soon would this earth be changed to hell, and where would there be any safety for life or property?

Proclaim to all offenders that they may violate law with impunity, and the foundations of society are de-

stroyed, and a free rein is given to lust and avarice, and all the appetites and passions of men.

III.

What then are the conditions of pardon? What limitations has God given to guide us in the use of this plea? “Forgive as we forgive.” Here is the test which God applies, and by which He would have us try our hearts. *“If ye forgive not men their their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you.” “He shall have judgment without mercy, who showeth no mercy.” “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.” “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.” “When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father which is in Heaven may also forgive you.”*

“Speak not of vengeance! tis the right of God,
Vengeance is His. Who shall usurp the bolt,
And launch it for Omnipotence? Shall man
Assume the right of judgment, or prescribe
How far the line of mercy shall extend,
Or punishment shall stretch its iron rod?”

Suppose a company of hard-fisted, narrow-minded, bigoted and over-reaching men to approach the throne of God with this petition. They oppress the poor, deceive the ignorant, and take advantage of those who are in circum-

stances of trial and distress. They monopolize the gifts of God, bind heavy burdens, shut up the kingdom of Heaven, and hinder those who would enter; riot in their luxuries while others are starving, and then go into the presence of God and say, “Forgive as we forgive; deal with us as we deal with our debtors.”

If God should answer such prayers, He would open the flood-gates of divine wrath, and overwhelm their guilty souls forever.

God forgives such men as He forgives demons; He gives them the desire of their hearts, lets them “eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own desires.”

He forgives them as the king in the parable forgave the unmerciful servant. He has compassion, cherishes no unkind feelings, grudges, or resentments, but all His love is rendered ineffectual by their own perverse and rebellious spirits.

There is just one way by which the forgiving love of God may be rendered complete and effectual. The holy Spirit of God must change our natures, and make us new within. The Spirit of Him who said, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,” must take possession of our hearts and guide our lives.

Worldlings may declare this grace unmanly; infidels may denounce it as “the dog-like virtue; the grace of a beaten hound,” but he who knows the sweetness of

God’s mercy, by his own blessed experience, will glory in it as the crown of all graces.

Hear, in conclusion, the language of one who knew, better than any other uninspired man, how to touch the secret springs of our nature and give expression to its loftiest thoughts.

“The quality of mercy is not strained :
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from Heaven,
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed :
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
’Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.”

Better still and more awfully solemn, are the words of the great apostle to the Gentiles.

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge : and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

VII.

OUR FATHER'S GUIDANCE.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”—MATT. vi : 13.

“OUR FATHER’S GUIDANCE.”

“Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!
Pilgrim though this barren land ;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.”

When a sinner comes to himself he begins to be in want. When he understands the nature of his want, he seeks forgiveness, and when accepted and pardoned, he enters the service of Christ and begins to contend with sin, he feels the need of heavenly wisdom and spiritual help.

His enemies are numerous and strong, his own powers enfeebled by sin, and when he looks within and around, and sees things as they are, in the light of Heaven, the language of his heart is, “Father, take my hand. Lead me, lead me, for I need a guide divine. Lead me not into temptation, not into the midst of my enemies, for they are too many and too strong for me.”

He is pardoned, accepted, and adopted into God’s family, but still there is something wanting—strength for the journey, and power to meet and grapple with the enemy.

He is like a newly fledged birdling, just beginning to test his new found powers. As he looks back upon his former condition, his rags, his wretchedness and ruin, and thinks of the possibility of falling from his high estate, he begins to tremble and call for help, and as no earthly friend can give the counsel, strength or guidance which he needs, he lifts his heart to Heaven and cries for help divine.

Seasons of excessive joy are often succeeded by fiery trials.

Moses, the great law-giver of Israel once received peculiar favors. He stood upon the Mount where he saw God face to face, talked with him as friend talks with friend, and received the law directly from His hand.

But when the visions, revelations, and miracles were past, he returned to behold a sight by which he was grieved and tried beyond endurance ; a people who had said in the most solemn manner, just forty days before, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do,” were howling, shrieking and dancing around a golden calf, filled with the frenzy of idolatry, in utter disregard and forgetfulness of all their vows and promises.

What wonder was it that Moses then lost his temper, broke the commandments, ground the golden calf to powder, and from it made a nauseating draught of which the people were obliged to drink.

When David, the sweet singer of Israel, danced before

the Lord, and returned to bless his house, he was met at the door by one who poured contempt and ridicule upon him. He had plucked the flowers and fruits of joy and triumph, and now he feels the thorns. He had been lifted up to the third heaven of bliss, and now the messenger of Satan comes to buffet him. He had given free expression to all his pent-up feelings of exaltation and delight, and now his heart must be bruised and pierced with taunts and jeers, and cutting inuendoes.

Similar to this was the experience of our Lord.

Just before he uttered the words of this prayer, He had passed through the fiercest fight, and most terribly exhausting temptation which any mortal ever endured. After His baptism, when the heavens opened, and the dove descended, and the voice of God was heard saying “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” He was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”

What He suffered during those forty days and nights of agony, in that dreary, desolate place, no tongue can tell. He Himself, never told His awful experience there to any human being.

But with truest, tenderest sympathy and divinest love, He desires that we, as far as possible, may be delivered from such conflicts. Coming from that battle with Apollyon, knowing by experience what temptation means, He teaches us to say, “Lead us not into temptation.”

The desert of temptation is a dreary place. It is dark and cheerless, and devoid of every creature comfort. It is isolated, separated, away from all human help and every means of earthly deliverance.

No one in his senses would ever wish to go there, and though the discipline may be necessary, yea, absolutely essential, yet the natural cry of every child of God is, "Lead us not in that direction—lead us not into the desert." Conscious of our weakness, and our ignorance, we draw back from the conflict and ask to be delivered, but always with submission to the will of Heaven, and unflinching loyalty to the Captain of our salvation. This petition is then a plea for guidance and deliverance. First, we pray that we may be led away from all solicitations to sin, and all severe and crushing trials, so far as is consistent with the Divine will.

And secondly, we pray that when tried and tempted, drawn this way and that way, to the right and to the left, we may find a way of escape.

Lead us not *into*, but *out of* temptation. We are in a world of trial, surrounded on every hand by scenes and objects which allure; so lead us that we may be delivered from their fatal snares.

He who loves war, and rushes recklessly into the conflict, is the first to flee when in the presence of danger. No greater cowards can be found than those who are forever boasting of their strength, and daring others to

fight. But show me a man who is opposed to war, who hates strife, whose nature recoils and draws back from it, and I will show you a man who, when duty calls, will stand as firm as a rock, and who will die rather than surrender.

Temptation means trial, probation. We are in temptation from the beginning to the end of our existence, and we never understand this petition until we take it in connection with the prayer for deliverance.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” or, as our revised version has it, “from the evil one.” There is an evil one; there is a personal devil. He has fixed his throne here, and collected legions of evil spirits. He is the prince of these spirits—“the prince of the powers of the air.” The spirit which rules him is a spirit of wrath and hate. He takes all shapes to suit his dark designs. Sometimes he comes as an angel of light, and sometimes as a roaring lion; sometimes with soft words, and smooth words, and sometimes with great, swelling words of wrath and malice. But the purpose is always the same. He hates God and the kingdom of God, and his object is by every possible mode of warfare, offensive and defensive, secret and public, to hinder the progress of God’s kingdom, and destroy the souls of men.

Do you ask why I believe in a devil? Simply because I see so much that is devilish. Rid the world of all

devilish customs, devilish opinions, works, and ways, and you will make it very hard for me to believe in a personal devil.

Show me a place where the people are all good, honest, amiable, and lovely, transparently pure and perfect through and through, and you may be able to convince me that there is no devil anywhere about. But so long as I see so much dishonesty, fraud, treachery, and duplicity; so much that is vile, tricky, malign and cruel; so much, in short, that is like the devil, I can’t help believing that his majesty is somewhere in the vicinity.

See how the strong lord it over the weak! See how the rich oppress the poor! See cultured and refined villains using all manner of arts and devices to entrap the innocent and unwary, laying snares, digging pits, working night and day, as if their lives depended upon it, and when the object is accomplished, gloating over the ruin they have wrought!

Read the recent revelations in London, which have created such an earthquake of excitement throughout the civilized world, involving lords, dukes, members of parliament, and even the royal family itself, in crimes against decency and purity; using their wealth and position to ruin innocent girls. See these and other monstrous evils, evils which blast the prospects and blight the happiness of their victims for time and for eternity, evils perpetuated even under the sacred name

of religion, and under the cloak of a christian profession, and then tell me if there is not something in society to suggest demoniac agency—something to suggest the horns and hoofs, the serpentine windings, and lion-like boastings of the arch-fiend!

The power of the tempter is of a three-fold nature. His arts and devices are innumerable, adapted to every age, race, nation, and individual.

There are three principle forms, however, under which all temptations may be classed :

- I. Those which reach us through the *body*.
- II. Those which reach us through the *mind*.
- III. Those which are addressed directly to our *religious* natures.

I.

The first and most common form of temptation, is that which aims no higher than the physical or animal—the gratification of the appetites and passions.

This was the first temptation of our Lord : a conflict between the animal and the spiritual, the body and the soul. The tempter came to Him, perhaps, in the form of a man, dressed in the garb of a traveler, wearied and worn, and famishing with hunger, and after the usual salutations, said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

This first temptation of our Lord is the first with which we have to struggle. The flesh cries out, "what shall we eat, and what shall we drink." The spirit answers, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." The flesh says, "Take care of the material, gratify your passions, eat, drink, and be merry." The spirit says, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall these things be?"

The tempter comes to one who is in this struggle, and shows him a short road to the accomplishment of his object. If he listens, parleys, yields, he is henceforth under the tempter's power. He is *in* temptation, in the sense that he is under the power of the tempter's charms. He may not know it or suspect it.

The victim of intemperance never suspects that danger is nigh, until the habit is fastened upon him. He may see the growth of the habit in others, wonder at their folly, and warn them of the fatal effects and tendencies of such a course. But his own case is peculiar. *He* can play with fire and not be burned. *He* can take vipers into his bosom, and receive no injury. *He* can look upon the serpent in the wine cup, and watch its colors with no fear of its fascinations and enchantments. He can breath the polluted air of the house of feasting and revelry, and yet escape its foul contagion. And so he wavers, and vacillates, and parleys with the tempter, until the fatal snare is drawn, until a strange,

unnatural love for the intoxicating cup is formed, the fiery cords of this sinful habit are fastened upon him, and debased, degraded, and dishonored, he is dragged downward through poverty, shame, disease, and woe, towards a drunkard’s grave, and a drunkard’s hell. Now he may struggle and strive in vain; the grasp of a giant is on him, while his power of resistance is daily becoming weaker.

“You must give up drink, or die,” said a physician to one in the power of this temptation. “Well, then I must die,” was the answer, “for I cannot give up the drink.” He had squandered his property, robbed his wife and children of their necessary food and clothing, broken the heart of the one whom he had solemnly promised to love, honor, and cherish, sacrificed time, talent, youth, and beauty, all that was noble and God-like in his nature, and yet, with death staring him in the face, and hell yawning to receive him, he could say, “I must and will have the drink.” His love for drink was stronger than his love of life, stronger than his love of home and friends, wife and children. It had triumphed over every other passion and affection.

Another victim of this evil habit said to a reformer, “It is impossible for me to stop; I realize it. If you should tell me I could not have a drink until to-morrow night, unless I had all my fingers cut off, I would say, bring the hatchet and cut them off!”

Another said, “If there stood a cannon, and it was loaded, and there was a glass of wine on the mouth of the cannon, and I knew you would fire it off if I approached, I would start to get that glass of wine.”

“You know I am your friend, and you know I will tell you the truth,” said a physician to a young man suffering in delirium tremens. “You have a hard siege before you ; I think I can pull you through, however, but if you ever again touch a drop of liquor, you need not send for me, for you are a dead man.” The young man looked up and said, “Doctor, you say I have to suffer, what do you know about it? Suffer ! I have had great spiders draw their soft bodies, with hairy legs, all over my face and in my mouth. I have had green flies buzz in my ears, and crawl—ah ! ah ! they are coming now !” And in less than two minutes he was in most terrible convulsions, requiring two men to hold him. Ten days and nights he suffered torments unutterable, and yet, when he was on his feet again, he went straight to a saloon, called for a drink, and continued drinking until he died. Such is the awful, tempting power of the lusts of the flesh.

II.

Satan tempts man through the mind, by appealing to his love of honor, power or fame, the burning, restless, raging passion of ambition.

There is a kind of ambition which is praiseworthy ; a desire to be great in the sight of the Lord—a longing of the soul for that genuine nobility of heart and life which is set before us in the Gospel.

But the kind of ambition most common among men is that which springs from the promise of the tempter: “ye shall be as gods.” It is a desire for that kind of greatness which comes from rank, money, or any other kind of earthly power. No man knows his own weakness in this regard, or his need of help from Heaven, until his strength has been tried.

“Every man has his price,” is a common saying, and one which seems universally true. Aaron Burr once said, “No moral agent, since the world began, ever prevailed over twenty-five per cent profit.”

So the tempter said of Job, “Doth Job serve God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all he hath? But put forth now Thy hand and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.”

And to give the devil his due, we must acknowledge that he had some reason for speaking as he did. So many strong men had fallen, so many of the best and noblest of earth had been cast down and overcome when tried in this way, that it did seem that it would hardly be safe to subject Job to such a trial.

O ! how many seem to have some selfish motive mixed with all they do ! So long as it is for their advantage to serve God, they are very religious, but let the devil offer them some better place, some good, fat office, and their heads are turned. A thoughtless man may see no danger here, but let him begin to reflect and pray, and like Bunyan, he may see the very heavens on fire, the firmament crackling and shivering, while beneath, the earth is opening, and figures of men are tossed up with globes of fire and blood, while devils mingling with them laugh aloud at their torments.

He who knows the least of himself is the most confident, strong and presumptuous. He can weigh the mountains, subdue the elements, and yoking fire and water compel them to his service. He believes not in God, man or the devil, but puts his trust in his strength of body and of mind.

To such the tempter comes with promises of wealth and power.

When he took our Lord to the exceeding high mountain, it is said he showed him “all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.” The struggle there was desperate. The Son of Man, our great exemplar, there met the champions of the hosts of hell, and triumphed over him, with no other weapon than that which he puts into the hand of every one of his disciples, the sword of the spirit, “the word of God.” “It is written—it is

written—it is written”—that was the only answer He gave the arch fiend, and that was all we need.

Light and darkness, good and evil, the kingdoms of God and the kingdoms of Satan, are arrayed against each other here upon this earth in hand to hand conflict. Myriads of invisible spectators behold the scene and anxiously await the issue as the tempter says to some young man, “all these things will I give thee.” Thou shalt live in luxury and ease. Thine every wish shall be gratified and every sense shall receive the full fruition of enjoyment which it craves. Men shall delight to honor thee, and say many things of thy greatness and thy glory.

Visions of houses and lands, broad meadows, covered with a rank, luxuriant growth of corn, or waving grain, servants in livery to go and come at his bidding, and a table loaded with the richest delicacies and viands—all these and other glowing pictures rise up before the mind of the intended victim, but the end—the dreadful end—of a worldly, godless life is hidden.

The avaricious man, the man *who will be rich*, is in temptation.

The love of money, the accursed desire for gold, is a fire in the bones, a burning, restless, raging fever. The man is unhappy both in the pursuit of his object, and in the possession of it.

He is envious, jealous, always in hot water, always anxious lest some one shall gain a small advantage over

him. And when his object is accomplished, when his riches have increased, and his coffers are filled, he is not satisfied. *Conscience* does not trouble him, for her voice is hushed. *The law of God* does not trouble him, for he is a stranger to God and the claims of His law. *The wants of a perishing world* do not trouble him, for he is deaf to the cries of the poor and needy.

Even the ties of nature are disregarded, and it would seem as if the man might now have peace, at least the peace of the dead sea, or the graveyard. But no ! there is a viper gnawing at his heart, unsatisfied desire, a deep, unutterable and insatiable longing after something, and what he knows not.

He has been deceived, cruelly deceived and blindly led into a snare, and when God awakens him, he will cry, as did the wretched Queen Elizabeth, “Call time again; call time again; millions of money for an inch of time !”

God hath declared that “He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver.”. Solomon had silver to the value of \$5,000,000,000, and gold to the value of \$3,000,000,000, and yet in the midst of his affluence he sat down and wrote these words—“Vanity of vanities.”

“Behold the picture of earth’s happiest man !
He calls his wish. It comes. He sends it back
And says he called another. That arrives,
Meets the same welcome; yet he still calls on,
Till one calls him who varies not his call,
But holds him fast in chains of darkness bound.”

We come now to the most daring, dangerous, and presumptuous of all the tempter’s fiery trials—*that which aims directly at the highest and holiest part of our nature.*

There is a way to hell even from the gate of Heaven, a way which seemeth right, the end of which is death; and no man is so terribly deceived as he who is in that way. When the tempter sees that a man is bound to have a religion of some kind, he tries to satisfy him with a false religion, and if he fails in this, he tries to mix the false with the true, and so corrupt and dilute it as to make it weak and inefficient.

Take for instance the grand doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. No doctrine is more important or precious. Its worth cannot be over estimated. It is divine and glorious in its origin, nature and effects. But the best things in this world are liable to the greatest abuses, and while genuine faith saves, a false faith, a dead faith, a faith without works, brings swift and sure destruction. Such a faith in the goodness of God, or the Divine Fatherhood, or the “darling attribute,” as it is called, of God’s infinite mercy, as leads to carelessness and neglect, or such confidence in the merits of Christ as precludes the necessity of repentance and a life of new obedience, is most pernicious.

“You are not under law but under grace,” says the tempter, “therefore you may live as you list.” You are called, justified, accepted and adopted, therefore you

have no more need of fighting. Christ has died, his work is finished and complete. “Nothing, either great or small, remains for you to do.” Therefore you may live for yourself and gratify yourself. A most glorious truth, linked with a most fatal delusion !

The divine side of our religion is a fact; the human side must also be a fact. It is a fact that Christ has come, and suffered, and died. But to make His work effective in us, there must be a personal coming to Him, union with Him, and a life of new obedience.

To trust His work—while rejecting Him—is moral and spiritual suicide. He who thus casts himself down will find no angels ready to bear him up in their hands.

Then “let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

A clergyman, in speaking of a brother who had fallen into sin, used words of severest censure, declaring that he himself could never be overcome in that way. In less than a year he fell, and was deposed from the ministry for the same offense. The prodigal’s eldest brother seems to have passed for a true and faithful child until the younger brother returned, and then the latent passions began to rage and foam as if the very spirit of the evil one possessed him. Anger, malice, envy, jealousy, and every evil passion imaginable, came to the surface and seemed to get control of his better nature.

A stream of water may flow on very quietly for many

miles, and its smooth and glassy surface may seem a perfect picture of peace, but let it meet with obstructions, or let its waters be compressed into a narrow channel, and it begins to rage and foam in madness, rumbling, muttering, roaring, dashing, and threatening the destruction of everything within its reach.

Hazael, horrified at the thought of shedding innocent blood, yet going straight forward to fulfill the awful prophecy of Elisha ; the beastly Nero ; the bloody Mary, and the murderous Robespierre—all amiable and lovely in their youth, yet at length astonishing the world with their heaven-daring iniquity—give most striking illustrations of the strange developments of character which come through the tempting power of a change of place or position.

All God’s people must be tried. Show me a man who has never been tried, and I will show you a weakling. Show me one who has been battered and bruised, marked and scarred, enduring all in a spirit of meekness, and I will show you a hero—one who will stand in the day to which all eyes are looking, when the mask of the hypocrite is torn from the faces of his foes.

Through great tribulation the redeemed must enter the Kingdom, and our Master has taught us that days of trial and calamity are coming such as this world has never known. “Watch ye, therefore, and pray always

that ye may be counted worthy to escape these things, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange things happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.”

VIII.

OUR FATHER'S DELIVERANCE.

“ Deliver us from evil.”—MATT. vi: 13.

“OUR FATHER’S DELIVERANCE.”

“Our Father, deliver Thy children from sin,
From evil without, and from evil within,
From this world, with its manifold evil and wrong,
From the wiles of the evil one, subtle and strong;
Till, as Christ overcame, we, too, conquer and sing,
All glory to Thee our victorious King.”

Miss Havergal.

There is no need of a special revelation to teach men the great fact of the existence of evil.

God alone can understand and reveal its nature, its extent, the means by which it may be removed, and its victims delivered, but the existence of it is one of the facts of our experience, which no sane man can deny, and which no argument can gainsay or resist.

Sin and misery abound. The deadly night-shade grows luxuriantly, and the air is full of its pestilential odors. It is not a rare exotic which cannot be produced except at certain times, in certain places, and under certain favorable conditions of soil, climate and culture. It is indigenous. It springs up naturally, and grows spontaneously, without regard to time, place or circum-

stances. It flourishes in every land, on every shore, and at all elevations and lines of latitude.

It multiplies fast. It increases wondrously. It spreads from field to field, from land to land, and from continent to continent ; and there is no blest spot where terrified man may flee to escape its power, or rid himself from its pollution.

In prison and palace, in camps and courts, in church and state, in the salons of the rich, and in the abodes of poverty, evils of all kinds abound and flourish. A little thing at first, and seemingly insignificant, when once planted and firmly rooted, it grows and spreads with such amazing ease and vigor that no power on earth can remove it or arrest its progress.

A drop of pure water in a gallon which is foul, makes no perceptible change, but put a drop of foul water in a gallon which is pure, and it pollutes the whole. So he who attempts to purify his heart and rise toward God, must go step by step through toil and trial, and constant opposition, while they who take the opposite course descend with ease, and with ever increasing velocity. This wondrous growth, and propagating power of evil, is one of the mysteries of this world. How this mystery of iniquity came, and why it is permitted to remain and continue its work of desolation and destruction, are questions which we cannot solve. It is enough for us to

know the fact that evil exists. How shall we escape?—this is the most important question.

When a man is lying upon the battle-field, wounded, bleeding, dying, he has no time to philosophize and theorize in regard to the nature of his wound, or the instrument which produced it. What he wants is the remedy. When the battle is over, and his wounds are healed, and he returns to his home and friends, he will have plenty of time to discuss these curious questions. So, when we enter Heaven, when the great conflicts of life are over, and all the wounds which sin has made are healed; when we have passed the pearly gates, and the clouds are cleared away forever; when we sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or talk with them and all the redeemed who gather there, of “dangers past, and wonders still to come,” we shall have time enough to discuss these deep, dark, metaphysical problems.

What we want now is *deliverance*. Deliver us! Who shall deliver us?—this is the sad cry, the earnest cry, the universal cry of burdened souls. Who can quench the heart’s deep, burning thirst? Who can reduce this wild anarchy to heavenly order? Who can turn aside these desolating fires and floods?

“Where sin’s red dragons lie in caverns deep,
And glare with stony eyes that cannot sleep,
And o’er the heavenly fruit strict watch do keep,
There our poor souls long struggling to get free,
Torn by the strife in painful agony,
Cry out, O God, my God, deliver me.”

and exciting inquiry, it stupefies and renders us insensible both to our own condition, and to the highest, holiest, and heavenliest of motives.

It is from beneath and not from above, a perversion of all that is true, and beautiful, and good, a violation of law, a derangement of our nature, a mischief and a curse.

Men sin, not because of any eternal decree, but because they love sin and delight in iniquity. They are deceived because they love deception. They wander in darkness, because they love the darkness, and if they go down to hell, it is because they choose to go there.

Created for the highest and holiest enjoyments, men choose the lowest, fighting their way down to ruin in open, determined, and constant resistance to all the checks, rebukes, warnings and entreaties which a loving Father, and an inviting Heaven can bring to bear upon them.

“O! it is monstrous, monstrous!

Methought the billows spoke and told me of it.

The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,

That great and dreadful organ-pipe pronounced” the awful nature and the guilt of sin.

Well then may we cry as we think of sin’s ravages, deliver us from this evil—save us from this monster! If there is a way by which our souls may be made holy, a power by which scarlet and crimson stains may be removed, and our hearts restored to purity and innocence,

let us know that way ! No earthly power can save us, for all earthly means have been tried in vain.

“Deep are the wounds that sin has made ;
Where can the sinner find a cure ?
In vain, alas ! is nature’s aid,
The work exceeds all nature’s power.”

Like the bitten Israelites, we are dying—what we want is life, health and healing. We cry unto the Lord; deliver us, O Lord, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory ! Thine the outward kingdom, and Thine the inward cleansing, healing, and restoring power, and Thine forever from first to last, shall be the glory of the work

Notice now the extent and comprehensiveness of this petition. It reaches far beyond the sin itself, and cries for deliverance from all the *effects* of sin. It means deliver us not only from the transgression of the law, but also from the penalty of the law, from wickedness and wretchedness, from the power of sin, the guilt of sin, and the misery of sin. Like the word “temptation” this word “evil” embraces all the varied forms of trouble through which we may be called to pass. It means deliver us from poverty, slander, disease, intemperance, desertion, insanity, all open solicitations to sin, and all invisible snares.

Consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, this cry for deliverance is ascending from men who

are suffering from storms, fires and earthquakes, from men who are laid on beds of sickness, from the millions who are oppressed and borne down by the iron heel of despotism, enslaved by false customs and false systems, conscious of their thralldom, and longing for the day of light, enlargement, and liberty.

“The whole creation groaneth in pain together.” The very beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, yea, even the very stones cry out to God for the promised deliverance. All objects, animate and inanimate, and all creatures, rational and irrational, feel the curse and groan beneath it. Every blessing Heaven vouchsafes us has been poisoned, and if we could see the danger we are in from invisible foes, the effect would be most startling.

If God should give us telescopic and microscopic vision, we should be so filled with fear and terror at sight of the wonders and dangers within us and around, that life wou’d become a curse instead of a blessing.

II.

From all these evils there is a way of deliverance.

After a night of sleepless anxiety, the King of Babylon once gave utterance to a question which is to-day the great question of the world.

Coming in haste very early in the morning, and looking down into the den of lions, into which the envy of jealous men had cast the purest man in the kingdom, he

cried with a loud and lamentable cry—“O, Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee?”

The thronging millions of heathen lands, groaning beneath their burdens, look to us and ask the question with intense anxiety: “Is thy God able to deliver thee?”

Skeptical men, who have tried again and again the remedies of their own invention, and found them unavailing, look to the Church of Christ and cry in agony: “Is thy God able to deliver thee?”

Parents and children ; the aged and the young ; the poor, oppressed with their poverty ; the rich, distracted with care ; the tempted, the discouraged, the weary and the heavy-laden, look to the church or the individual christian and ask in breathless suspense the all important question—“Is thy God able to deliver thee?”

Thank God we are able to answer these questions in the affirmative!

Our God is a God who hears, and helps, and delivers His people. He is able to hear ; He is willing to hear ; He has promised to hear, and He has never yet failed to fulfill all He has promised.

The skeptic says—“Prayer is a harmless delusion. God has nothing to do with it. It is the man himself fixing his mind and heart upon some desired object, wishing, watching and making everything subservient

to the accomplishment of that object, until the desire is realized by his own exertions.”

The believer says—“My God will hear me.” Gods of wood and stone cannot hear. Those who trust in false gods are deceived and deluded, and false gods are just as numerous in christian as in heathen lands. There are gods many, and lords many, but there is just one living God, just one God who hears and answers prayer, and this God is *our* God, our choice, our delight, our loving Heavenly Father. He is not a prisoner who cannot, or a despot who will not, hear us. All means, agencies and causes in the universe are under his control, and all are made subservient to the deliverance of His people. Our Father uses *all the forces of nature* for the deliverance of his people. Read the story of the Waldenses hemmed in by the French and Sardinian army, their crops ungathered, their supplies cut off, driven almost to madness by the gnawings of hunger, and see how God delivered them ! See how he kept their grain unhurt beneath the deep snow, and then when their breast-works were broken down, and deliverance seemed utterly impossible, see how he raised over them a fog so dense that they escaped unseen, though surrounded by their foes. Read the story of the Covenanters—“Let us pray here,” said the leader of a band of these poor, persecuted people. “Let us pray here, for if the Lord hear not our prayer and save us, we are all dead men.”

Their strength was exhausted, and their enemies in sight, as the old man prayed—“Twine about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of thy cloak over puir old Saunders and these puir things.” Even while he was speaking the answer came. The hill where they knelt in prayer was enveloped in a mist, and their enemies passing by went on their way wearying themselves in a vain and fruitless search.

The destruction of the invincible armada and the French fleet under Duke d’Aville, are examples of the way in which God uses the winds and the waves for the deliverance of His people. If the wind had blown one way, the Spanish Inquisition would have been established in England. But he who holds the winds in the hollow of his hand, so ordered and controlled the elements on that day, that England was saved from the accursed institution, and seventy-five thousand tons of shipping were sunk in the depths of the sea.

A day of fasting and prayer was appointed in Minnesota a few years since for deliverance from the grasshopper scourge. The next year, although the grasshoppers appeared again, a parasite attached itself to them which prevented them doing damage and laying eggs, and so the scourge was stayed and the threatened famine averted. Was that a mere coincidence, or did the God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah and the great sea-monster to deliver Jonah, make use of that little

parasite to answer the prayers of His people in distress?

Our Father answers this prayer for deliverance *by the preparations and interpositions of His Providence.*

God has a plan, and all the events of life, however confused or irregular they may appear, are but the filling out of this plan. Science tells us that every atom of the universe is under the control of law. God's word goes farther, and tells us that back of all law is a mind and a heart.

Stand by the Falls of Niagara. Look upon that vast deluge of water, foaming, hissing, whirling, now dashing in spray, now rising in foam, and now lifted up in mists which reflect all the colors of the rainbow! How lawless, confused and chaotic! Yet every atom of that dishevelled mass of water is held in the hand of God, and by that hand it is controlled and directed.

Wherever there is space there is God, and wherever God is, He is active, guiding and controlling all things. How delightful the assurance that all beings, agencies and causes in the universe are under the control of one who loves us with an everlasting love.

Are you in harmony with God? Then all things which can in any way affect your real happiness, present or prospective, temporal or eternal, are on your side and co-operating in your favor. Seed time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, and all the silent, mighty forces of the universe are working for you.

Flowers are blooming for you, the corn and the grains are ripening for you. All the trees of the field and the cattle on a thousand hills are living, and growing, and spending their strength to support and bless you. Clouds are carrying water for you ; stars are shining for you ; sun and moon send forth their light and heat to cheer and comfort you. Angels of light are your ministering spirits, and all the innumerable influences and agencies under the control of your Infinite Father are working on your heart to sanctify and save ; preparing you for glory, honor, immortality and eternal life.

Take down your harps then from the willows ! Sing unto the Lord a new song ! Your Father, Saviour, Brother, is on the throne, and no mountains of law or gulfs of mystery can separate Him from you !

The following facts from Dr. S. H. Willey’s “Thirty Years in California,” show how God, by seemingly unimportant events, can answer the prayers of His people and change the whole destiny of states and nations : Before the discovery of gold in California, the few adventurers who had gathered here were mostly in favor of the British protectorate. When the war with Mexico began, American and British fleets started at the same time for San Francisco. Just one week before the British fleet arrived, Commodore Sloat hoisted the stars and stripes. In the same month, July, 1846, three hundred Mormons sailed from New York for San Francisco,

while Brigham Young, with fifteen thousand Mormons, was advancing overland, hoping to settle on this coast. Finding the stars and stripes floating over the harbor, the Mormon colonists who came by sea sent word to Brigham Young, and California was saved from the blighting curse of Mormonism.

Again, on the same day on which the treaty was signed by which Mexico ceded California to the United States, gold was found. Had gold been discovered one day earlier, that document would never have been signed.

See how in answer to prayer both Europe and America were delivered from the infidelity of Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire and others. The great foundation truths of the Christian religion seemed hopelessly buried beneath a superincumbent mass of worldliness and error. Christianity was stigmatized as priestcraft, miracles were denounced as frauds and impositions. Bishops led the way in worldliness until the King was obliged to interfere and put a stop to their excesses. Blackstone says there was not enough Christianity in the sermons of the clergymen of London to determine whether the preachers were disciples of Confucius, Mahomet, or Christ.

"Then began men to call on the name of the Lord." All over the land devout souls gathered together in praying circles. In England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and throughout New England and the Middle States, men and women were wrestling day and night in prayer,

and in answer to these prayers the great evangelistic movements under Whitfield, the Wesleys, and Jonathan Edwards, were ushered in.

The great missionary movements of the age have come in answer to the prayers of God’s people. There are wonders here in the transformation of individuals and nations which no man can understand who shuts out God from human history.

The heathen Gourgis went into a meeting with a dagger and gun to make disturbance, but in answer to prayer was so transformed that he was found the next day crying—“O my great sins! O my great Saviour.” For eleven years he preached the gospel with great success among his fellow mountaineers, dying at last with these words upon his lips: “Free grace; O, it was free grace!”

San Quala, one of the first converts among the degraded Karéns, was raised by prayer from the lowest state of degradation. For fifteen years he guided the missionaries through the jungles. Then, beginning to preach, he established in one year nine churches, with 741 converts, and in less than three years thirty churches, with 2,000 converts. Offered a lucrative position by the British government, he declined it, choosing rather to suffer with Christ for the blessed privilege of preaching the gospel.

All the wonders wrought in foreign lands, in the

Hawaiian Islands, in India, China, Japan, and the Dark Continent, have had their birth in prayer.

In India during the years 1878-9, there was the greatest turning to God that has ever been known since the Pentecost. Sixty thousand people in Southern India passing over from idolatry to Christianity within the space of twelve months. Wonders similar to this are reported from other mission fields, wonders which confound the skeptics and give unmistakable evidence of a supernatural power—the mighty power of God's spirit working in the hearts of God's people in answer to prayer.

Is there no God in all this? Can the skeptic account for these things on any theory of rationalism? Are they not special interpositions of Heaven in fulfillment of our Father's promise of deliverance?

Our Father makes use of *angelic agency* for the deliverance of His people. When Elisha's servant was terrified at sight of the great host which compassed the city, the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, in answer to the prophet's prayer, and he saw, "and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire." And if God should open our eyes, we might see in our own life history deliverances as wonderful as any recorded in the Bible.

Angels have been employed in bearing messages to God's people. David says, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

“They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Again, he says, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.”

The history of the church is filled with signs and wonders, and marvellous deliverances, wrought by angelic agency. An angel came for the deliverance of Isaac, just as the knife was lifted for the fatal stroke. Two angels came to deliver Lot from the destruction of Sodom. Angels were sent to protect Jacob from the violence of his brother. They delivered Hagar and her child from a terrible death in the wilderness. Hezekiah prayed, and God sent an angel to destroy the hosts of the Assyrians. Daniel prayed, and God sent an angel to deliver him from the lions, and Peter and his friends were praying when the angel of the Lord came, and a light shined in the prison, and Peter was delivered.

Our Lord said that legions of angels were ready to come at His call, and all through His life these shining hosts were coming and going, according to His word. When He left this world He was accompanied by angels, and when he returns, He will come “in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.”

The same angelic aid which Jesus had, is in the reach of His disciples. The angels of God are our companions, *silent, invisible*, yet *real* companions and helpers. Beware of the sin of Saul, for which God slew him.

Beware of “seducing spirits and doctrines of devils,” but remember that all good angels are for us, and that those that are for us are more than those who are against us. Our Father answers this prayer and sends deliverance *through the person of His Son.*

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” “If the word spoken by angels was steadfast,” how much more weighty and authoritative is the word which comes to us through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God. And He is coming again. The day of victory and deliverance is drawing nigh. The time is coming when all that is dark now upon this earth will be as clear as the golden light of day. God has promised to give His Son the heathen for His inheritance.

However fierce and long continued the struggle, the church is sure of ultimate victory. Great changes will yet take place. The very earth on which we tread, which has been, and still is, the battle-field of the universe, is yet to become the happy home of the redeemed and holy. When it came forth from the hand of God, it was as beautiful and perfect as He could make it.

The coming of Christ will restore this beauty, and the present dispensation will end with the “new heaven, and new earth” promised in revelation ; no more evil, no more

sin, no more curse! This glorious prospect of a world redeemed, is held up to us from the beginning to the end of revelation. We are to look for the appearing of the Lord—wait for it, love it and long for it, watching continually for the bright and morning star.

Satan may heat his furnace seven times hotter than it is wont to be heated, but “He that shall come, will come and will not tarry,” and when He comes, He will make short work of the destruction of His foes. Then shall we understand the meaning of this prayer, “Deliver us from evil.”

See the vast ocean of human life, roaring and surging, tossed to and fro by the wild tumult of its conflicting elements! See men in every department of business, labor, art, or science, striving in a thousand ways of their own invention to cast out the evil spirit which is foaming, and raging, and gnashing its teeth in madness! Out of all this seething mass of corruption and darkness, our Lord will yet deliver His people.

Our weakness is our strength; our days of sorrow but the prelude to our everlasting day of rest and blessedness. We cannot deliver ourselves; no earthly power can deliver us, but “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.”

When a Roman general had performed great feats of valor, and the Senate had decreed him a triumph, every man, woman and child in the realm looked forward to

the appointed time with joy, eager to join in the great procession, and spread abroad the honor of their chieftain. The gates of the city were thrown wide open, the houses decorated, and the people climbed to the roofs, or stood in crowds along the streets. At length the victorious legions began to pour along the streets, with banners streaming, and trumpets sounding. First came the Senate and magistrates: then the musicians and the spoils: and when half the army had defiled, your eye might rest on one who was the center of attraction, riding in a chariot drawn by milk-white steeds, on his head a wreath of laurel, in his hand a sceptre, and in the other a branch of laurel. Chained to his car were the kings and mighty men whom he had conquered, and in the rear the army.

Such a scene as this was before the mind of the apostle when he wrote the words—“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” and such will be the final triumph of our King.

Are you pardoned and accepted in the Beloved? Then pray for complete deliverance from sin. The prayer is not deliver us *in* evil, but deliver us *from* evil. “From all evil and mischief; from sin; from the craft and assaults of the devil, Good Lord deliver us. From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, Good

Lord deliver us.” And last of all, and with special fervency, pray “from hardness of heart and contempt of thy word and commandment, Good Lord deliver us! By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion, Good Lord deliver us!”

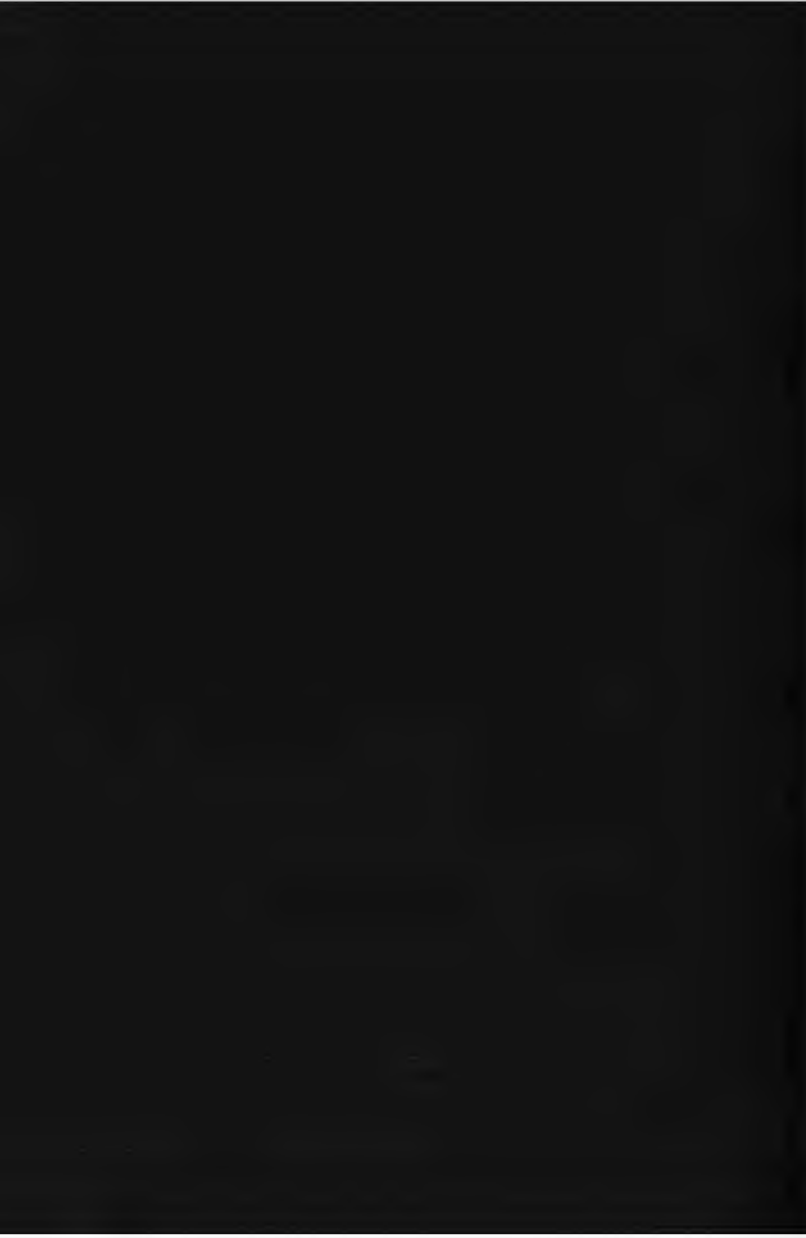
And if you are still in sin and in danger of death eternal, with the law of God above you and the abyss of woe beneath, Satan as your guide, and death as your attendant, may the voice of God arrest you, and the love of Christ constrain you to bow your soul at the footstool of love and mercy now, and by your own blessed experience learn the power of prayer to open the gates of Heaven and move the heart of God.

And when the shadows lengthen, and the day declines, and the mists of evening gather; when the senses close their portals, and your lips can no longer utter the words of prayer or praise, the voices of angels will call you, and the hands of angels beckon you, and your sun shall not go down in endless darkness, for the Lord shall be the light and glory of your habitation. Absence from Him is night; His presence is cloudless and eternal day.

Learn to know and love that presence here and now, and in the moving centuries of the eternal future, you shall worship at His feet and gaze upon the unveiled glories of His person.







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